



2007-2008

Center for the
SUPPORT of
Beginning
TEACHERS

TIPS FOR NEW TEACHERS



A Message from the Dean

Welcome to a timely publication for beginning teachers published by Western's Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers. Teacher Tips is a collection of teaching tips posted by Western North Carolina first-year teachers participating in the Center's online support program to share with one another and with other new teachers.

Teacher Tips: A Collection of Ideas, Plans, and Strategies for New Teachers by New Teachers invites us to look into the classrooms of first-year teachers as they face the challenges of becoming accomplished teachers. Through suggestions, strategies and stories, they share their dedication, commitment and overwhelming desire to make a difference in the lives of the students they teach. This is a resource that can be revisited often by both experienced and beginning teachers as issues and events surrounding planning, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities unfold.

Western's College of Education and Allied Professions, the Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers and our school partners are committed to providing a variety of opportunities for beginning teachers to network, collaborate, and support one another—to help them stay connected and avoid the feelings of isolation that drive some from the profession. The children of Western North Carolina will be the beneficiaries.

Best Regards,

A. Michael Dougerty
A. Michael Dougerty

TEACHER TIPS

A Collection of Ideas, Plans, and Strategies for New Teachers by New Teachers

Submitted by first-year teachers participating in Western Carolina University's
Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers 2006-2008 online support program:

Alleghany County

Cherokee County

Cherokee Central

Clay County

Graham County

Haywood County

Jackson County

Macon County

Mitchell County

Summit Charter

Swain County

Yancey County



Acknowledgements

We would first like to take this opportunity to thank the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for their very generous support. Our first Z. Smith Reynolds project, the Beginning Teacher/Teacher Leader Program (2002-2004), became the seed that led to the establishment of Western's Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers. In May 2006, Z. Smith once again provided funds for a two-year beginning teacher support program—Project START: Supporting, Training, and Retaining Teachers. The goal of Project START is to establish an online network of support, bringing together beginning teachers in Western North Carolina outside the constraints of geography.

We extend appreciation and thanks to the beginning teacher coordinators and public school and university E-mentors whose efforts and talents have made this project possible. It is a privilege to work with this extraordinary group of individuals who are truly committed to beginning teachers. Each week they encouraged the new teachers in their group to build on what they were doing well, supported them as they tried new ideas, and helped them sustain their passion for teaching.

The beginning teachers in this project are amazing—generous and patient in responding to our requests for information and feedback. Thank you for opening your classrooms and teaching lives to us and to each other. We are fortunate you are working with the children in our region and sincerely hope you never lose your passion for teaching.

A very special thanks must go to Dean Michael Dougherty for his vision, encouragement, and unfailing support of the work of the Center. Under his leadership CSBT is recognized as a leader in beginning teacher support in the state.

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tips for teachers: PK-2

Planning and Preparation

Organizing: Day-to-Day

Benicia Kennedy: PK

This is my second year teaching preschool. I have learned a lot from my first year of teaching. My first year, I spent a lot of my time at work. I was learning all of the paperwork, regulations, preparing my lessons, etc. It was a very difficult year—as far as me learning everything I needed. The most useful thing that I learned as a beginning teacher was learning the routine of school (paperwork, meetings, IEPs, etc.) and how to use my time wisely. Now, I use my nap time as a planning period. I try to get my next day ready while the children rest. There are days when things happen unexpectedly, but for the most part, I do not spend as much time at work. I just want to let other first-year teachers know that your first year is the hardest, but it does get easier.

Coral Litzau: K

I have picked up a few useful tips to save time and be better prepared for the day:

1. Instead of using a traditional grade book, I have created my own table in Word. In K there are so many things that you do EVERY day—such as calendar, nap time, Centers, etc.—that I have found it much easier to have it already set up and saved. This way, I only have to fill in a few slots to finish the day/week planning. This saves SO MUCH TIME!!!
2. Have a folder for every day of the week on-hand and easily accessible. (Mine are on my desk.) This way, I simply reach for the day's folder and all of my papers are waiting for me. This tip is courtesy of a first grade teacher, here at East.
3. Take-home folders are your friend. These are so useful and handy, I don't know what I would do without them. You can communicate with the parents on a regular basis (well, most of them), and it is easy to relay materials back and forth. I also have a behavior chart stapled inside of my calendar, where I have drawn smiley faces on each day. If they flip a card that day, that is the color their smiley face will be. Underneath I write what that child did to have to flip a card. In a perfect world, the parents would look at the folders daily and sign that they had seen it. At the end of the month, I put the behavior charts in the student folders so that I can refer back to them as needed. This is a good way to document behavior patterns. Also, you can easily keep parents informed of upcoming events or deadlines.

Hannah Johnson: 1st

At our school, we have a school-wide system for planning. For each lesson you plan, you must follow the provided outline. You must include a review, your objectives, materials, guided practice, independent practice, and next-day expectations. Although this is very time consuming, it really makes you stop and think about how you are going to tie all of your lessons together from day to day. For each lesson, you have to think about what you will do the next day (to follow up) and about what you did yesterday, to bring the concept back to life for the students. This has been really helpful for me as a first-year teacher. Also, while I am planning, I like to implement at least one fun thing to do with my students every day. My mentor was the one who encouraged me to think about this. She commented that, for some kids, this is the only place where they can come and have fun in a safe environment, and we need to provide that for them. They need to be having fun and laughter every day. I mean, come on—they're six!

Organizing: Year-to-Year

Affie Hightower: PK

Already this year I have accumulated a couple of filing-cabinet drawers, notebooks, and boxes full of planning materials, which I plan on using year-after-year. In an effort to organize some of this material, I am going to make monthly lesson plan boxes. This way I will be able to safely store those materials that will not fit into a filing cabinet or notebook and also keep everything together that I will need for the months ahead. In order to carry out this plan, I am going to purchase 8 to 10 fairly large Rubbermaid containers. I am going to label each container with a different teaching month. I will then place the materials that I have accumulated for that month in the box. I hope next year, as I begin to plan for a particular month, that I can pull one of these boxes and have a good base to begin my planning.

Lisa Burch: PK

I have been saving all my lesson plans from this year and putting them in a notebook. I'm hoping that next year I can pull from some of the lesson plans and not have to start from scratch. Also, I find my co-teachers are a great resource in planning. They all have great ideas and don't mind if I borrow from them!

Karen Thompson: PK

This year has been so much easier for me in regards to planning and preparing materials for my lessons. I am in my third year of teaching in NC and fifth year overall, so I have five years of lessons from which to pull. I began my first year like many first-year teachers. I had to start from scratch. I saved my lessons online and placed all materials in a folder arranged by themes. I am in the process of becoming even more organized by using the under-the-bed storage boxes to store all materials, books, etc. according to themes/months. By doing this, next year will be even better and, all materials are neatly stored.

Julia Norman: K

This year—being a first-year teacher—I have had a lot of work to do: coming up with all new lessons and activities for my students. However, as I have been going along I have been saving my activities and work in a weekly folder. So now I have 24 weeks worth of lessons that I can use next year. Also, all plan books are different; therefore, I made a table in Word to type out my schedule. This way I can cut and paste, I can remove days easily, and I can edit as I go without having to white out and erase. In this table I place

my daily schedule (put in the SCOS), Homework, Show & Tell list (for each day), and the Spelling Word list. This is very effective for me—so much so that my entire team has switched over to it. Also, it will be handy for years to come because you can just edit the already-made document.

Planning for Next Week

April Woody: K

I created a plan on the computer that helps me write my weekly lesson plans. I have a time-slot schedule that I copy and paste from. My Language Arts is basically the same time each morning—such as calendar time, weather, welcome song, morning message, and the predictable chart. Other areas that change little are music, PE, lunch time, and snack time. This way I can spend more time on my other areas like units and crafts. It also helps me in my weekly report which has to be turned in to the principal.

Amanda Sutton: K

I plan for my entire week on Thursday or Friday of the previous week. By that time, I can pretty much tell where we will be by the next week. I make all my copies and place them in folders labeled Monday through Friday. I also put a list of materials I will need for hands-on activities, etc. This way, I can just go to the hanging folder for that day and pull it out to see what is going on. I can gather all the materials and be prepared.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Sherry Maney: PK-2nd E-mentor

I plan several days in advance (usually by Wednesday of the week before). I typically use Thursday to gather materials and make lists for my assistant as to what things I need for her to help prepare. As I am gathering work or materials, I write each child's "magic number" on individual work to be done. This helps me when a child forgets to write his/her name, someone is absent, and when I am putting completed work into take-home folders. I simply put the work in numerical order, check for any missing work and then it is easier to fill folders (which are also placed in numerical order). Another planning strategy that works well is the use of pacing guides. Our Kindergarten team has a common pacing guide for each subject area that we write at the beginning of each school year. I regularly review this guide to help with planning for SCOS goals. With input from informal and formal assessments (K-2 assessments), the pacing guides keep me on track.

Sherry Maney: PK-2nd E-mentor

And...as far as the help from janitors... I couldn't do my job without them! They are wonderful at our school! In the past, I have had an appreciation day, where my students helped make a special snack and made cards/gifts to give to our special helpers in our school. We invited the janitors, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, secretaries, etc. The students served the snack, handed out the cards/gifts, and sang songs for the entertainment. This event was so enjoyed by all. Our helpers in the school need to feel appreciated, as well.

Long-Term Planning

Krishna Allison: 1st

One thing that I have learned over this year is that no matter how much I plan ahead, in the end, my lessons never follow the time-table that I had planned. Therefore, I now plan week by week, and if my students are ready to go on, we go; if not, we take some more time to focus on the particular concept at hand.

Miscellaneous

Kimberly Dixon: K

Be flexible. Make a lesson plan for the week, but then feel free to make modifications as necessary. Don't make school your life. At the beginning of the year I spent 99% of my time at school or at home working on projects for school. Now, I set aside time to do work, and when that time is up I quit. I'm a better teacher now that I have time for myself and my family.

Genetta Gift: K

Planning is something that I enjoy doing. I like to search the Internet for activities that go along with each unit. Along with the activities that I find, I also use resources from my Kindergarten team. I think it is important to see what the rest of your grade level is working on; and typically, they also have great ideas for activities. Usually I plan over the weekend so I can just sit down and focus. It takes about two hours if I already have activities in mind that go with a theme. I plan morning work, which allows the students to practice handwriting, cutting, coloring, and gluing. Other routines that we have every day are a time for math, writer's workshop, and Centers. At the beginning of this past year, I just had one time-slot for Centers, and the children stayed in them the whole time. Now I have working Centers, where students accomplish some task, and free-choice Centers, where they have more time to socialize. It is important to have a plan in mind, but I think flexibility is important as well. There are times I will change my mind about what I want to accomplish that day, and we will work on something different. Planning is one of my favorite aspects of teaching because, as a first-year teacher, it provides me with guidance and structure. Having a plan for the week gives me something that I am sure about.

Audrey Tipton: 1st

I have designed my own planning sheets with room to reflect. On my desk I have folders for each day of the week. Being prepared for the following week keeps me from taking work home.

Missy Johnson: 1st

I know that we have all heard it before, but no matter how well you plan out your day you have to be flexible—especially this first year. You may plan to teach a topic a certain way, but during your first year, it is hard to know whether the students will be receptive to your methods. Monitor their reactions and comprehension, and if necessary, quickly modify your plan. Also, be aware of external circumstances that could affect the success of your plan; such as, at the end of the day (when they may not give their full attention to you), the weather, or an abnormal routine for the day.

Anne Bernotski: 2nd

Definitely be flexible. There is no telling when something might change with your plans. After hearing people at my school complain about how things change so quickly, I have learned to make plans that can easily be changed or postponed.

Classroom Environment

Community and Behavior

Dannelle McCall: PK

In my classroom, I sat down with my children on the first day to discuss what they thought the rules should be and elaborated on what the rules actually were. This allowed the students to gain a clear understanding of our expectations. We also use rewards and consequences to enforce the rules by implementing a “three-strikes, you’re out” method. This allows each student three chances to correct his/her behavior by talking with us about why the behavior is inappropriate before dealing with the consequences. As a reward for appropriate behavior, we have a treasure box and offer incentives such as extra outside time, stickers, and plenty of praise. I feel like if you set a clear basis for what the rules are and stay consistent, then you are more likely to have a calm and well-maintained classroom environment.

Julia Norman: K

1. I like to start out each day as a new day. I have a system to pop a balloon each day to get rid of all of “yesterday’s troubles.” My students know that those problems aren’t mentioned any other day. The children love this and they know they get a fresh start.
2. Community in the classroom is important. I have my children sitting four at a table, and they have to share materials like markers, scissors, and glue.
3. Family. In my classroom we are a family. Therefore, when some of our family are fussing or fighting with each other, we have a Family Meeting. In this meeting the kids get to say whatever they would like and no one gets in trouble. We talk about what is happening and how to solve our problems. This is very effective for them, and it gives them a time to tell their friends that they hurt their feelings and that they are sorry.

Kimberly Dixon: K

Have clear rules and do not bend them. Actually listen to what the students have to say. Give LOTS of hugs.

Christy Pruett: 1st

I think that it is important for children to always be able to “start over” their day. I have a behavior chart where you can move up or down. If you started out having a bad morning, you can always change the day around and be able to move up by the end of the day. This way a student will not feel that they are going to have a bad rest-of-the-day.

Jessica Adams: 1st

I think that a comfortable environment is really important in a classroom. As a mother and a teacher, what has really helped me in working to create and sustain a comfortable environment is having the mentality to try and teach/treat each child the way that I would want my own child taught/treated.

Teresa Stepp: 1st

It is important to create a classroom environment of mutual respect. I start with a few simple rules: i.e., do your best, show respect, and help each other. I set up a system for rewards and consequences relating to those rules. Classroom discussions about the rules, rewards, and consequences help the students know what to expect. I start out being a stickler and follow through on rewards and consequences.

I set up routines for my students and teach those routines in the first few weeks of school. In addition to lining up, moving through the halls, lunchroom etiquette, and bathroom breaks, I implement class jobs, which change weekly. The students enjoy having a job in the room, and it helps them have a feeling of ownership. My class jobs are teacher helper, front-line leader, book Center helper, writing Center helper, math Center helper, table cleaners, etc.

Cassie Bryson: 2nd

I think it is important to create a community in your classroom—this includes sharing supplies. I have a bookshelf in my room where we all share crayons, markers, and even pencils. We have a pencil cup of sharpened pencils, then a cup for pencils to be sharpened. These are little things, but it really helps create a community of sharing. Also, this does away with some children having ridiculous pencils, notebooks, etc. and other children not having anything. We also have a class meeting to discuss what was great about the week and what we need to improve on.

Pam Gunter: 2nd

In our classroom we have a reward for positive behavior—for the whole class. I put up blanks (like for hangman), and the students earn letters to find out what they get. They can earn letters for things like walking down the hall quietly, getting a brag from a specials teacher, (music, art, etc.), having excellent behavior during independent work, etc. The kids love trying to figure out what they are going to get.

However, the students can also lose letters if they have a really bad day—this is as a whole class. I can see a huge difference in class behavior since we have started this. Everyone is working to be their best so that they can earn a letter. We also have a clip system for individual students.

Jennifer Smith: 2nd

I have found that creating and maintaining an effective classroom environment is very important. To create an effective classroom environment I have stressed to the students that “in our classroom we work as a team.” We have jewels that the whole class is working to earn. Students know that if they fill up a small jar by the end of February, they are going to receive a special surprise. This helps the students work as a team, and they have to realize that in order to get the jewels, everyone in the class has to be the best student that he/she can be. This strategy is really working well in maintaining an effective classroom environment.

Anne Bernotski: 2nd

I begin each day almost as if it were the first day of school. I welcome each of my students individually as they walk through the door. Every morning I give a note to my students welcoming them to school and providing a list of tasks for them to complete once they are ready to begin the day. As questions, problems, or concerns arise throughout the day, I address each one individually in the most positive manner that I can think of at the time. I encourage a lot of choices and decision-making from my students; I do this by providing two or three things to do and then allow them to vote for the one they would like to do. The majority rules at the time, but we always work to get each task accomplished, even if it is the next day. Even though my name is outside the door, I work very hard to make the classroom belong to not just me, but all of my students as well. We do several activities that produce artwork and other decorative items—which we hang around our room and in the hallway for the school to see. This encourages my

students to do their best work, which in turn guides them to work productively throughout the day. Obviously, we not only work, but we have time to play as well. We go outside to play when the weather permits, as well as joke and laugh throughout the day. I think this really helps my students get to know me and each other; it definitely helps me get to know my students. The most important thing I do to maintain an effective classroom environment is encourage my students. I never tell them that they can't do something, even when they claim to be unable to do any task. I see that as an opportunity to re-explain my expectations (not only of the task), but of the students as well. I make a point of finding out what specific part of the task is troubling and then work to clarify it by working one-on-one with the students.

Hailey Caldwell: 2nd

I try to keep everything in my classroom as kid-friendly as possible. I play music every morning as the students enter the room so that I can set the tone for the rest of the day. The students know exactly what tasks they need to complete every morning (book bag, notebook, lunch choice, check your job) before they start their morning work. I greet every child with a smile as he/she walks in the door, and I always try to say something nice to or about everyone each morning. I have labeled everything in the room at eye level so that it's easy to see and accessible for every child. I just added a comfy loveseat to my classroom—which has worked out great for when I meet to read with students, conference about writing, or just allow them to snuggle up and read. Our classroom rules and procedures are posted in two places in the room, and the students know exactly what the consequences of each inappropriate action will be. I try to be as fair as possible. I never let one student do something that I have not let another do, and I give my students a lot of responsibility in how our classroom operates. A lot of times they seem more in control of their actions, and those of their classmates, than I do; which is nice because they want their classroom environment to be a comfortable, fair, and chaos-free one.

An Efficient Environment

Karen Thompson: PK

I believe it is very important for children to feel comfortable in their classroom. I have many needy children in my class and have made their environment feel homey and inviting. I feel children, even at the Pre-K level, should have responsibilities during their day. We have a job chart, "Helping Hand." I have 14 students; 10 have jobs each day. These jobs range from line leader to cot helper. My students love it!

Anna Kate Shook: K

I believe that a lot of student behavior depends on the classroom environment. I feel that by keeping a neat classroom, without "too much" clutter, kind of sets the mood for a calm class. When I first came into my classroom in November, there was a lot of "stuff" I inherited from previous teachers. Kids were tripping and falling over it. Since I began teaching, I have slowly but surely tossed what was junk and arranged Centers so that the room flows a little better. Since the classroom is now less chaotic, so are the students. Also, I feel a set routine is also very beneficial. If the students have jobs (such as cleaning a certain Center, wiping a lunch table, lining up to go somewhere) there is much less craziness! Finally, I think that in order to have a calm, cool, and collected classroom environment, the teacher needs to portray that. The teacher sets the mood for the day. A teacher that goes with the flow and takes everything in stride will have it a lot easier than a teacher who gets frazzled easily.

Pam Gunter: 2nd

I was running myself crazy for the first few weeks in the classroom—trying to do everything. Then I realized that my kids could do these things. So I made a job chart with clips. Now the students do things like hand out and take up papers, clean the room, pass out the snacks, anything that they can do. It helps me feel less frazzled by the end of the day, and the kids love doing it. It also gives students who finish work early things to do so that they don't get in trouble.

Physical Environment

Tammy Lowe: Title I

In my classroom I have tried to make it extremely user friendly. I have two tables pulled together that can seat 8-10, if we squeeze. I like that we are all together; it gives me a sense of family. So many of our classrooms are set up with individual desk arrangements. Some teachers try and pull them together and make a “table” area out of them, which is great. But I feel that when students come to my room, I would like them to have a sense of security. Some of these children do not know what it is like to sit down at a family table for dinner or even to do their homework. I hope that in my room they will develop that sense of family.

Dannelle McCall: PK

I believe that setting up a classroom-environment based on the different “sound” areas, and having an organized classroom, helps keep the mood calm. We set up Centers based on loud, medium, and quiet zones. This keeps the children in the loud zones from disturbing the children in the quiet zones. I also agree that keeping a lot of clutter out of the way and having a labeled, organized space (for everything in the classroom) keeps the children from being over-stimulated and allows them to know where everything belongs when it is time to put things away.

Amanda Cook: PK

Well, I would have to say from my experiences this year that I have found that placing the book/reading Center in a corner by itself really makes the environment more comfortable and appealing to the readers of the classroom. At first it was not in the corner, but still in a quiet place in the room; however, it still wasn't being explored. Because of this, I changed it to create more interest, and it worked!

Teresa Stepp: 1st

My students sit at tables. All seats at the tables are positioned so they can see the front and back of the room where I am most likely to be when teaching the whole group. I arrange the seating so that each table has students with different ability levels. Except during testing, I encourage my students to help each other. This seating arrangement facilitates students helping each other. When students are working in small groups, I choose students from different tables to make up those groups. I also change the seating arrangement about twice a quarter.

Krishna Allison: 1st

I think that in order to make an effective classroom, the environment needs to be inviting. I am constantly changing the way my room looks, according to the holidays in each month or a specific theme. For example, everything in our room is red, pink, and purple. I think the room having a different look, the students are more excited about learning what each month has in store. Also I am changing the seating arrangement in my room every

two weeks. I noticed that students often get bored with their seating arrangements, so I like to switch up. For my classroom to run effectively, the rules stay the same and the consequences for breaking those rules are always consistent. I enjoy changing my room each month, and watching my students' reactions is amazing!

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Debbi Madill: PK-2nd E-mentor

I have found over the years that the physical layout of my classroom impacts my Kindergartners' learning (and behavior) in so many ways. The past few years I've found what works for me and my students and have kept the room arranged pretty much the same way. A lot of it is just common sense and seeing how things work out. When I teach small groups at my table, I am facing out so I can monitor the rest of the class while they do Center activities. My assistant's table is on the opposite side of the room—she faces out also and can monitor the class, too. I have well-defined Centers so the children know the boundaries (lots of low shelving), and they know how many children can be in a Center at a time. I rotate materials so there's not a ton of stuff out at a time—the children can pick up easier when there's a place for everything. During the first weeks of school, I have seen too many teachers put out too much stuff thinking the room is inviting, but it's usually overwhelming for the children. (I've heard those stories about teachers who put all their puzzles on open shelving and the first day of school every puzzle piece gets mixed together.) I have areas where children can be active (blocks, housekeeping, etc.) and passive (reading, easels, computer, etc.). I "divide and conquer"—which means I use all my space so the children are spread out and busy. When I have group time on the carpet, there is room for all, and every child can see what's going on. My classroom furniture is positioned so no child is out of view. A well-thought-out environment can prevent a lot of problems!

Instruction

Karen Thompson: PK

I use a lot of music and movement along with rhymes in my class to help my students learn. It's a lot of fun, and the kids love it!

Amanda Cook: PK

I have found that the shorter you keep your lessons the better; and sometimes, no matter what the lesson, there are still a few squirmers in the bunch who have a hard time staying focused and interested. So I started using puppets, yes puppets, funny voices and the whole nine yards. They LOVED it! No more squirmers, and if so, they don't squirm very long!

Julia Norman: K

In my Kindergarten class, we started the use of tallies at the beginning of the year to add up how many days we have been in school. This also helps them count by 5's and add. After Christmas break, my class started counting down the days and counting money; therefore, during math we substituted dimes, nickels, and pennies for the tally marks. Now my students are still counting tens, fives, and ones, and we are having to exchange money each day. This is reinforcing my counting lesson. They are having fun with it and getting really good!

Nichole Mathis: K

In my Kindergarten class, we have started using learning contracts during Center time. These contracts provide a structured way for each student to manage their own work in an independent way. At the beginning of the week, I introduce the contract for the week. On the contract, there are activities that they must do each and every day that week. There are also activities that must be completed by Thursday. Due to special classes on Friday, we only have a limited amount of Center time. This week I also provided “choices” on the contract because I had some Centers that the students rarely ever went to. The students have really enjoyed the contracts. They have a clipboard, and they keep their contract and a pencil clipped on the board. The contracts are very easily managed, and the students are responsible for getting their work done in a timely manner. The contracts also help manage the behavior and activity in the classroom. I have really enjoyed doing the learning contracts.

I like to have the children act out things as they are learning—for example, after reading a nonfiction book on penguins, I had two little boys pretend to be daddy emperor penguins and stand still keeping their plastic egg warm while two little girls (the mommy penguins) flopped on their bellies and pretended to slide into the ocean to catch fish, etc. Two other Kindergarteners curled up small and pretended to hatch from their eggs, and so on—the kids have a blast and come up with their own parts to do. Next week we will read a great picture book on the underground railroad and the freedom quilts. They will color quilt squares (each one has a special meaning) and pretend to escape like the slaves did by following the secret meanings from the quilt squares. The more involved children can be in their learning, the more they retain. Sometimes my big group time can go on for awhile, but I always make sure the kids do some kind of movement after 15 minutes or so of sitting, and then quiet down again—it helps get that oxygenated blood back to their brains.

Another great instructional strategy is using “Thinking Maps.” Our school has provided training in this, and if you ever have the opportunity to get trained, do it!

Kimberly Dixon: K

Interactive activities...get those kids up and moving! :) Try to make smooth transitions. I have found that singing a song, in between, makes the change in subject much easier. Have activities and games that can be modified to different ability levels. For example, if one group is sounding out words, another might be identifying the beginning sound.

Jessica Hughes: K

I have found in my classroom that everyone pays attention and learns faster when we have a movement activity, or a song, that goes along with a topic. Also, I have used many poems in my class throughout the year. Periodically we go over the poems, and they can still say every one of them by memory!

Hannah Johnson: 1st

Since my kids are only six, I really have to think about planning my instruction so that it lends itself to their attention span. I make sure to vary my instruction at least every fifteen minutes, usually by moving to another part of the room. We do a lot of movement between the carpet and our seats. This has seemed to be very effective in keeping their attention. Although it creates more transition time, the time is well spent if it helps to keep them interested in what I am saying.

Teresa Stepp: 1st

I have also learned to be flexible and reflective regarding my teaching methods. If one way doesn't work, try a different way.

Eric Gerace: 2nd

For me, instruction is all about teaching the same topic in a dozen different ways. I like to mix it up as much as possible. For those students who learn right away, there is a great deal of re-teaching and review. For other students, it may take one of those more interesting strategies to get those brainwaves flowing. Each lesson involves a ton of class participation, movement, outside-the-box thinking, and humor. Studies have shown that laughter and fun fuel educational success. My classroom can often be considered chaotic, but I like to think it's a controlled chaos, full of learning.

Wendy A. Cable: Elementary Media

I am very fortunate to have access to a SMART Board in our library classroom. I feel that the hands-on activities and interaction that the students get to experience only adds to the learning activities. I thought I would share some interactive web sites for anyone who was interested or had an opportunity to use a SMART Board: www.starfall.com, www.firstschoolyears.com, and www.rainforestmaths.com. These sites can also be used without an interactive board. I hope you find them useful.

Additional Note by E-mentor**Debbi Madill: PK-2nd E-mentor**

I'm fascinated by some of the "Brain Research" that's out there and wish I had time to learn more—I try to incorporate some of it in my instruction. I find the children retain so much more when rote things (days of the week, letter names and sounds, names of the seasons, body parts, etc.) are put to music and acted out. Dr. Jean's CDs have been mentioned a lot, and they are great for this.

Professional Responsibilities

Administrative Tasks (paperwork, meetings, etc.)

Karen Thompson: PK

At the school where I teach, we have four Pre-K classrooms. We meet weekly for grade level meetings to determine what our themes are going to be and to share any ideas. We also send home monthly newsletters and communicate with each parent on a daily basis.

Julia Norman: K

Have a meeting with your team members at least once a month. This is great at BRS because we can talk about what is happening, get help, and share ideas with the other teachers. At my school the PK-2 grades meet as an elementary team and we converse; this keeps us in check with what is going on and things we all need to work on.

Parents

Julia Norman: K

Provide parents with newsletters to keep them up-to-date on what is going on and what is coming up within your classroom, school, and community. Also, let them know the concepts you are teaching so that they can reinforce these concepts at home.

Christy Pruett: 1st

I have found it very helpful to send newsletters home every week. This really helps me keep the parents informed, and it helps me communicate what the children are learning.

“Extra” Duties

Cassiopea Parsons: 2nd

As a first-year teacher, don't be afraid to take on added responsibilities. It's good to show administrators and fellow teachers that you are ready and willing to give a helping hand. When you do, just be sure that you aren't getting in too far over your head. Helping out with parent pick up or volunteering your room for the entire grade block to come and watch a speaker is a good way to help out. On the other hand, planning and organizing the grade block's big trip to Dollywood may be a bit more than you can handle. Take it from someone who has experience; don't volunteer to take care of the Dollywood details for the grade block in your first year. Make sure you know your own limits. It's great to show everyone else that you can help out, but you don't want to be so overwhelmed that you fall behind in your everyday responsibilities. There will be plenty of time for you to try and take on the larger tasks later.

Other Tips

Priorities

Amy Thomas: K

I think that teaching is the most rewarding profession. However, it can also be one of the most socially and emotionally draining professions as well. I think that developing and maintaining good working relationships with your colleagues is important. They have been, or will be, experiencing similar situations and can be there for words of encouragement and support. My relationship with my mentor has also been a tremendous asset for me. She has offered invaluable advice and support in my teaching; as well as reminding me to take time for myself and family.

Shannon Knott: K

As a beginning teacher, you can sometimes get lost in your teaching. You want to make sure that you are doing everything correctly and at a high level. At times, you'll feel that your life becomes the classroom, and sometimes you end up taking your day home with you. What I have learned from this year (especially since I have two young children at home) is to make sure that you make time for yourself and your family. It is okay to leave your work in the classroom and take some time for yourself. Now, you can't do this every day, but if you set aside one day a week—that you are not going to worry about school—your nerves, brain, emotions, and your family will thank you.

Bobbi Blake: 2nd

As a new teacher, it is important to make time for yourself as well as your family. Teaching is very rewarding, but it is also very time consuming. We work so hard to try to do everything, and do it perfectly, that it can take over our lives. Going in early, staying late, and taking work home can become routine quickly. There are times that we must do that, but do not let it take over your personal life.

Hailey Caldwell: 2nd

You have to decide early in the year that there must be a balance between school and home. Use every minute of your day wisely. Don't just sit around at school while your students are working on an independent task, PLAN! Monitor your students for a while and then plan, plan, plan. Otherwise you will end up taking home more work than you do

in a single day. I agree that teaching is a very time consuming profession, but it truly is rewarding. Oh, and whatever you do...DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO DO ASSESSMENTS! If you teach K-2 the assessment process is a long and tiring one, but if you work on it continuously throughout the year, not only will you know exactly how your children are performing, but you will also prevent cramming it all in at the last minute!

Help!

Karen Thompson: PK

During my first year of teaching a few years ago, I spent a lot of extra time at school. I'd arrive very early and depart well after everyone had left for the day. I felt I had to do everything perfectly. I soon realized I needed to slow down and find time for myself. Spending a lot of extra time at school can cause burnout. Always make time for yourself and use resources available to you.

Jacqueline Smith: PK

It is so important that you ask questions. I have learned so much from the other teachers at the school. At first I was shy about asking questions because I felt like I had to know everything, but I learned quickly that this is not the case. Putting my ideas with the ideas of other teachers has helped make my lessons more meaningful. I started teaching in the middle of the school year, so I had to learn and ask lots of questions about assessments and how they should be done. I feel that by asking questions I gained more knowledge about various tasks, which made me more prepared the next time.

Julia Norman: K

The most useful thing I have learned as a beginning teacher is to use my resources. There are a number of teachers around me who are ready and willing to help me, if I will ask them. And they are my experts.

Also, if you want stuff done, be nice to your janitors. I don't know how many things I was able to get for my room over the summer because my janitors knew where it was and if it was being used or getting ready to be thrown out. Always show them your appreciation.

Bobbi Blake: 2nd

The most useful thing I have learned is to ask questions, ask questions, ask questions. I believe there is no such thing as a dumb question. I would also rather ask questions and do it right the first time. I talk to my mentor, other teachers in my grade, as well as other teachers in the school. These people have helped me on PEPs, grading assessments, retention letters, and lesson plans.

Reflection

Genetta Gift: K

One thing that I have learned over this year is that there is a lot that children in Kindergarten have to do and be able to know. Instead of focusing on the fact that I am new and unsure, I try to focus on the fact that I have great support behind me with my mentor and my Kindergarten team. I truly feel that they would not let me fail. This understanding takes some of the pressure off, so that I can focus on planning and teaching to the best of my ability. Each week or two, I try to focus on something different that I would like to do better. We cannot be master teachers in one day—it takes time. I feel good about my support system because they provide me with materials, advice, emotional support, and so much more.



tips for **Grades 3-5 Teachers**

Planning and Preparation

Organizing: Day-to-Day

Chelsea Yearick: 3rd

Stay organized!! I am a very organized person, and I think that has really helped me with my planning. I have folders for each day of the week; and any materials that I might need for that day are in the folder. I also have binders for every subject with dividers in each for all the objectives. When I find a lesson plan or an activity for any subject, I put it in the binder so it will be easy to find if I need it again next year!

Melissa Gibson: 5th-6th Math

Now that my first year is almost under my belt, I have found that it is crucial to plan for EVERYTHING. The old adage "Expect the Unexpected" is no truer than in a classroom. Procedures for everything, from entering a classroom to pencil sharpening, are necessary to maintain a controlled classroom-environment. Sometimes your students will forget the proper manner in which you do business in your classroom; and you will have to provide a refresher lesson for them. Just last week, my students and I practiced walking in a straight line quietly. Also, always remember it is better to over-plan than under-plan. Keep a handful of activities set aside to use as time-fillers if your lesson runs short. Being prepared is the key for all classroom teachers.

Planning for Next Week

Dixie Shore: 4th

For me, planning helps keep me and my classroom-environment organized. I try every Friday to have the next week planned with all I need for the lessons. I quickly pencil into a planner book the topics, then I complete a Word file that contains an empty planner. I attach a copy of everything needed in the event a student loses a copy. Everything is kept in pockets of a hanging holder that is easily accessible each day. At the end of the week, the planner and attachments are filed away for next year. This isn't to say I don't change my plans sometimes. When a teacher shares a great idea with me, I may change to that. It means I scramble the night before preparing, but it is usually worth the effort. Also, my classroom has a small white board where only homework assignments are written each day. It is the responsibility of each student to write this info in their planners. A few of my students need help with this, which I try to do at the end of the day before

they pack up. There are a few cubbies in the room where they pick up homework sheets if it isn't a workbook sheet. If sheets are in the cubbies, they know to pick one up, then we will discuss it later when we go over the homework assignments.

Students take a morning work sheet—which I've left out before I leave for the evening—to begin the morning. They file their homework in their homework folder, which hangs in a file crate. When I am not prepared, my students catch on and they become rowdy. My problem is sometimes I pick up something, walk around with it, lay it down, then forget where I put it. I arrive at school early enough to see that everything is in place, and ready for each day. This assures me it is going to be a great day. I know many of you have already figured all this out, but I am still trying and learning, planning and preparing to make my teaching much easier.

Dixie Shore: 4th

I have implemented a chart with three columns: date, homework assignment and reason homework was not completed. At the end of each week I mail it to the parent. It doesn't need to be returned, because I make a copy for my files. This is also done for their reading log. Of course, this didn't seem to help the student for whom I was aiming, but at least it gives me a record, in addition to the homework check off sheet, as to what has been done. Before I mailed the first ones, I passed them by the principal; and he thought it was a great idea. When students are slack with homework, I begin keeping them in during bus play-time. This seems to impact the deepest.

Kellie Chapman: 5th

I like to do my planning one week before I teach a lesson. I have been going by this idea for a long time, and it has worked. I taught Pre-K before 5th grade, and it also worked in my Pre-K classroom. It is easier to teach a lesson if you know what you are going to teach. Making my lessons one week in advance helps me to pull resources that I might not be able to find if I were to plan a lesson and teach it that day. This idea also helps me to be organized.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Trudi Gunter: 3rd-5th E-mentor

I do something in my class that helps my students stay organized. I have a weekly contract that I use to help them see what they are supposed to be doing each day. At the end of the week, my students have to take it home to let their parents see what work was not completed. It is a good method for keeping the parents informed and for keeping the students on track. If you ever get a chance to use a contract, I highly recommend it. It takes a little while to get the students used to the routine, but it really pays off after they get it down. It also cuts down on the number of questions we have from our students. All they have to do is look at their contract to see what they need to work on next.

Long-Term Planning

Anna Blakley: 4th

The way I reconcile with the pressure to make learning meaningful is by planning ahead. It is kind of hard to plan a lesson that is truly meaningful to your students by rushing and throwing it together at the last minute. Also, taking the students' interests, background knowledge, and experience into consideration is important to hold their attention throughout the lesson.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Tamara Houchard: 3rd-5th E-mentor

One of the best pieces of advice a professor gave me many years ago was to visualize where I wanted my students to be, assess where they were now, and decide how many steps it would take to move them to the finish line. The “chunking” part is very important, both for you and the students. By breaking it down in chunks, the students can be successful; and you can evaluate on a smaller scale what has been mastered and what needs to be re-taught. Having a good lesson plan template helps because it reminds you to think of the different aspects of a good lesson—from materials needed to differentiation for AIG and EC students to emergency contingencies. I highly recommend that you write on those lessons after the day (on the very same day, if at all possible) about what went well and what needed to be adjusted (it is almost every time for me!). One of the templates I like was developed by Bernice McCarthy called the 4MAT lesson plan. This plan can be used for one 45-minute lesson, a week-long lesson, or a unit. It hits on every student’s strong and weak sides, and goes from the introduction of concept to true integration of knowledge. And lastly, always go back to your core question/concept that you want the students to really “get” by the end. If they don’t get every detail down, that is okay, as long as they can see the big picture and understand how it fits into everything else they have been learning.

Janet Nichols: 3rd-5th E-mentor

Flexibility is key for a teacher. There might be times when a lesson runs over, or the kids just don’t grasp the content and you have to scrap your plan and try something new. Having the plan is a great place to start, but also knowing when to deviate and make professional decisions concerning the needs of your students in the here-and-now is beneficial as well.

Miscellaneous

Nicole Cabe: 5th

One thing that I have learned, and has really helped me survive this year, is that I do not know it all. There was no way for me to know it all and be prepared for everything that has happened this year. I walked in the first day and learned quickly that things don’t always go as planned. You have to be willing to change what you had planned at the drop of a hat and be okay with that. There are things that are going to come up that will be more important to discuss than what you have planned, or issues that arise that need to be talked about right away. There are always programs that pop up at the last minute, and it is not worth getting upset. Do what you have to do and move on. None of us has the time we need within the classroom to get everything done; so be prepared to just do the best you can, use class time wisely, and take the unexpected with a smile. Another thing that is important to understand is that it is okay to make mistakes. That was the hardest thing for me to do! I didn’t want to mess up, especially with it being my first year.

Classroom Environment

Community and Behavior

Lindsay Merritt: 3rd

It feels like I live in my classroom, but that is not what I mean by making your classroom a home. A lot of my students come to me from broken homes. I could count on one hand how many of my students have both parents at home. I make sure that each of my students know that I love and care for each of them. I am constantly bringing pictures of trips that I have taken (since most stay around the area), and I even brought my wedding album (I got married in July) and showed them my family. I have found that the students not only “know” me better, but they appreciate me more and look at me as a person who cares for them—not just a robot in the front of the room. Before each student can leave in the afternoon, he/she has to give me a hug or a handshake. At first I got mostly handshakes, but now everyone gives a hug. It means so much to see how the kids care about me, all because I show that I care for them. I specifically remember a couple of days when I was sick and the students brought me things to make me feel better and checked up on me. It was great!

Kristin Buff: 3rd

There are lots of good ideas about creating a classroom environment, but people don’t talk a lot about maintaining it. As the year has gone on and my stress level has gotten higher, I’ve needed a little reminder to help me avoid messing up our great environment. Even on the days when I have a short fuse, the class is acting crazy and that kid who is always whining comes up and whines some more, I have to remember to stop, take a deep breath and respond in love. We’ve worked hard to get this environment, and I refuse to let one bad day start us down the road to messing it up. After all, most of the time it’s not the class’ fault that I am stressed out.

Lisa Finch: 3rd

I think that in the world we live in, making our classroom a safe place is key to student learning. Students need to feel free to share feelings and to make others feel safe as they share. Sometimes sharing a bit of yourself is necessary for making that real. You have to be careful not to share too much, but let them know there is more to you than just being their teacher. We talk a lot about the “perfect family” in our classroom, because so many are from split parents. One of the students shared such a touching story the other day about not knowing her mother. We all were just quiet as she shared such a huge part of her personal life. I told them they should all feel really special that she felt safe enough with us to share such an important thing in her life. My classroom, physically, may not be as homey looking as others, but I think it “feels” homey and safe to my students.

Veronica Pitman: 3rd

I think that the classroom environment needs to be bright and cheerful. It also needs to be a place where the students feel secure. You can create that feeling of security by not allowing bullying and ridicule of students. I also think that a teacher needs to treat the students with respect and be honest with them. When making class rules, it is a good idea to let students have some ownership in setting the guidelines—and the consequences. Keep the atmosphere as positive as possible.

Kelly Hilton: 3rd

A classroom environment needs to be one in which students feel safe, welcomed, and loved. To me, the most important thing a teacher can do to ensure a positive learning environment is to build a relationship with the students. Taking the time to get to know the students shows them that you care. When they feel cared about and respected, they are more open, trusting, and willing to learn.

I also believe a positive attitude about learning is contagious, and encouragement leads to a push to excel. If you show excitement and an interest, it will rub off on the students. A positive attitude is very important because if you don't seem interested in the subject matter, why should you expect the students to be interested and involved?

Melissa Gibson: 5th-6th Math

As I reflect on the many lessons I have learned in my first-year teaching, one seems to leap into mind that will be useful to all when they first walk into their schools. Never assume anything! That goes for teachers and students alike. Leave any pre-conceived notions at the door because you will truly be proven wrong on more than one occasion. I have sometimes made the mistake that my kids fully understand what I am trying to instruct them to do. They come back the following day, and I realize they didn't get the message at all. I have learned that sometimes we get so used to speaking our "grown-up" language that we forget that our audience is children. Always clarify directions in their words, and you can avoid this problem.

Jeff West: 5th

I've learned to be consistent and fair. This can be so hard and you will be tested many times, but students need consistency. They also need to know you are a fair teacher. They will quickly pick up on fakes as well, so I try to just be myself.

An Efficient Environment**Rich Harvey: 3rd-5th E-mentor**

One way that I find really gets my students focused is when I set up scientific activities within the classroom. From pulley systems to stream tables, topographical models to large scale diagrams drawn on the bulletin boards, I find my students inquiring about what these apparatuses are for and when they get to "play with them." I love this idea of "playing with science" because that is really what it is. We learn a lot through play. There is a great sense of freedom to learn how the various systems of our earth work and interconnect. The more experience I have with providing hands-on activities in the classroom, the more I realize that these activities really become a focusing agent for the current and future lessons. This innate curiosity drives an effective classroom environment and promotes student motivation.

Physical Environment**Tonya Greene: 3rd**

I feel that an effective classroom environment is one where the students feel at home and safe to be with you. I have tried to achieve this by using music in the room, allowing students to work in the floor as much as possible, and having students do jobs such as watering the plants or keeping the floor clean. I also have a fountain with rocks at the front of the room for a nice quiet sound (especially useful when testing). I generally keep one light off to create a soft-light feel in the room. The kids seem to enjoy all of this and remind me when I forget some of it.

Michelle Calogero: 4th

I have found that the way my classroom is organized is a big factor in how the students react and move around the room. I have moved several pieces of furniture and the student desks so that everyone, including me, has optimum learning space. One design worked great for me because it gave me space by having the computer table sticking out, but it caused a distraction to the students. Therefore, I moved the computer table to the back of the room against the wall. Now I can see how they are using the computers, and there is no place for them to hide.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Tamara Houchard: 3rd-5th E-mentor

One of the most important things for me is that I too need to enjoy my classroom, as well as the students. I am not a big fan of the overhead fluorescent lights and usually have only half of them on, or none at all. I use lamps and candles (a candle warmer is safe and works as well) around my room and have music playing most of the time. Curtains help students ignore the distractions outside the room. The walls, and even the ceiling, are covered with posters and interactive bulletin boards. I work on keeping the clutter down, and the students usually do better with this than I do with my own personal space, but it does make it a warm place for the students to come to learn. I am working on having more alternative student seating for silent reading time (right now I use carpet squares that I got at a rug shop).

Instruction

Erin McAleer: 3rd

You cannot do it all and do it all well—especially in your first year. Pick one area of the curriculum to focus on, and make it your priority for the year. Attend trainings and seminars for that subject area, do research on best practices in that subject area, and work on gathering materials and unique lessons for that subject. Work at being really good at one area, and then pick another area to focus on next year. This will help prevent burnout and will keep you focused throughout the year!

Heather Hyatt: 4th

Vocabulary! Ten vocabulary words are introduced on Monday. The students get out their vocab books (composition book) and open it to show facing pages. On the first page, the students write the word and definition. The words are used in a sentence and then written on the board. Then the class discusses the word meaning. The teacher writes the definition on the board and the students copy it into their book. For homework, the students write a sentence on the opposite page using the word correctly. On Tuesday, the class shares their sentences, and words are discussed. Then the students take a vocabulary test on the words. The same process is repeated on Wednesday and Thursday. The vocab words are taken directly from our reading, science, social studies, math, or even the EOG words to know.

Jonathan Burnette: 4th-5th

Using the Active-board in my classroom has helped a great deal with motivating and involving students in a lesson. I have also recently started using web quests more than I did in the first half of the year. My kids love these, and it also helps them improve their technological skills.

Heather Sutherland: 4th

My advice to new teachers is to teach their students at the students' level, even if it means that what you teach is not specifically in your grade's curriculum. For example, if you have fourth graders come to you at the beginning of the year not knowing their basic multiplication facts (even though they were suppose to have learned them in third grade and it is not in your curriculum), start with that. You have to teach the students on their level if you expect them to grow and learn; otherwise, there will be holes in their knowledge, and they will struggle with more advanced topics. For example, if I had not decided to re-teach my children basic multiplication, they would have never been able to learn 2 digit by 2 digit multiplication or long division. Also, involve the parents and let them know that you care. A helpful piece of advice is to call a parent three times about something positive before you ever have to call him/her about something negative. This ensures that the parent knows you care about his/her child and he/she will also be on your side and will not worry that you are "picking on" or singling out the child.

Additional Note from E-mentor**Tamara Houchard: 3rd-5th E-mentor**

I love Erin's comment about choosing one area to be the focus of your continuing education—it is so true that you cannot do it all! Some of the criteria you can use to choose that area is to look at your school's improvement plan. Is a particular subject causing concern? Has the school spent money/time on a particular program and materials? Becoming well-acquainted with it would be a good idea and place you as a valuable team member for your school. Also think about areas that you need to work on for your own understanding. I have also been working on converting many of my lessons into multi-curricular units of study; and as I learn of a new way to teach—say, fractions—I will create lessons that relate to several units of study in order to reinforce that teaching. It is a good way to get multiple uses out of your learning and help students review many times.

Professional Responsibilities

Administrative Tasks (Paperwork, Meetings, etc.)

Julie Waldroup: 3rd

From my first year of teaching, I have learned that it is crucial to keep good records. During the school day it is so hectic. It is hard to find time to write every note you need to write to parents. In my classroom, my students all have planners in which they write their homework down. I also write notes home in them. Lately when the students have behavior problems, I make them sign the classroom conduct book and also sign their planners themselves—writing what they got in trouble for. I have a copy of the conduct book pages for my records, then they have the note home to their parents in their planner. This saves time and makes the day a lot easier. It is so important to keep copies of all of the notes you send home to parents and the notes you get from parents. Another tip is to make a section on each letter that you send home where the parents sign and date it. This gives you a record that shows that they have seen and read the letter and the date they read it.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Trudi Gunter: 3rd-5th E-mentor

It is really important for all new teachers to know all the paperwork that is expected of them. Remember the PEPs, the absences, the parent meetings and phone calls; and when necessary, always keep a copy of students' work (especially the ones that may need to be tested or retained). I have always been good at keeping good records, and I have found that it is nice to pull out what you need and not have to struggle to find things when suddenly confronted by a parent or your administrators. Keep in mind all the paperwork that has to go into a student's permanent record. I hope this helps because I did not know about all the different kinds of paperwork my first year, and it was a hard lesson learned when I was struggling to get it all completed before the end of the year.

Parents

Kelly Hilton: 3rd

Like most new teachers, I was a little anxious about parent conferences. To help me, I keep a folder for each student. In the folder, I put all correspondences, copies of previous progress reports, tardy slips, copies of work that was less than their best, etc. When I have a parent conference, I just pull the folder. Everything I need is right there.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Richard Harvey: 3rd-5th E-mentor

A big idea that caught me by surprise was understanding custody issues. For students from a divorced, split, estranged, or abusive home, there may be court-ordered limitations regarding visitation; phone contact with a child, or teacher's child; or pick-up. Often these court orders are attached to the inside front cover of the student's main school file. At the beginning of the year, I write a quick note about any issues I'm required to follow. For example, a student may have a parent who was only allowed to visit him/her at school during the lunch hour on Friday. Lunch must be in a supervised location. Sometimes it can be that specific. If you have questions about some court orders, then you should ask the principal how to deal with it.

Miscellaneous

Ashley Hooper: 5th

College really can't prepare us for the wide-range of challenges that we face in the classroom. For example, I know when to report student concerns and when not to; but more scenarios on how to handle certain situations would have been beneficial. The only way I've been able to handle these situations is by talking to other teachers, my mentor, and the school nurse. I'll have to say that my first year has been quite a ride so far. That's just how life is; you learn as you go.

Other Tips

Priorities

Tenisea Griffin: 3rd

I realize that the kids are most important. There have been days when I began to stress over little "petty" things that, in the realm of things, don't seem to matter when it comes to the success of the kids in the classroom.

Tenisea Griffin: 3rd

As a new teacher, I realize now that I HAVE to have a life! I started the year working until 5:30 or 6 every evening. Then, I would spend all day Sunday preparing for lessons. I quickly realized that I was getting burnt out, way too fast. I realize that there has to be a happy medium for time spent preparing and working—just to keep your sanity! If I am happy and less stressed, my classroom climate will reflect that.

Tina Powell: 3rd

It has been really difficult for me, as a first-year teacher, to have enough time for my own children and my professional obligations. There were many times I felt like I had to make the choice to do what it takes for my job, or take time to enjoy my little girls. I would suggest to any other first-year teachers who have children to make sure to schedule time for your kids—even when school demands increase—and don't allow yourself any guilty feelings. Of course, we all enter this career knowing that it will be difficult, but I had no idea that I would have to make the choice between cuddle time or planning time. For me, this has been the most difficult emotional battle of the school year.

Kathryn McConnell: 4th

I have heard so many people tell me “Don't sweat the small stuff” or “Pick your battles.” Both of these statements have greatly affected my first year of teaching. I try not to get bogged down by the constant paperwork or the incessant whining from my students. These two phrases help me to be less stressed, (if possible), than I would have been otherwise. “Just take it one day at a time.”

Heather Sutherland: 4th

We all know that the first year of teaching is filled with work, work, and more work. From grading papers to designing lessons, it is all so new, and there is so much that needs to be done! Remember the saying: “Rome was not built in a day” and, that you cannot possibly do everything that needs to be done and that you want to get done. Know that there is always something that needs to be done when you are a teacher. The list of things to do is never-ending. Try using all of your time wisely and effectively, but also remember to make time for yourself! It will make you a better teacher! One piece of advice that was given to me early in my career was to actually plan and prepare during your planning time. Try not to chit-chat or complain in the teachers' lounge... in the end, this gets you nowhere, and you still have work that needs to be done. Another thing I learned during my first year is that other teachers are great! Find a couple of great teachers whom you can go to for anything, and make them your friends! You will have a lot of questions your first year and other teachers have been there and done that. They are usually a sea of information.

Nicole Cabe: 5th

It's very important not to take everything home with you. Not just the work but also all the emotional aspects of the job. It was important to manage my time so I got most of my work done at school and did not have to take papers home. I knew that if I started that routine then, I would never be able to get out of it. I also made myself leave every day by a certain time, or else I would be there all night long. There is always something that could be done, and there is always more. Don't worry; it will still be there the next day!

Humanity and Humor

Amber Farmer: 3rd

It is really important to make the classroom a nice and safe place for your students. So many of our students today come from broken and unsafe homes, that school may be the only place they feel safe and happy. It is also important to let your students really get to know you because they love knowing their teacher's favorite color or favorite food. For instance, I decorated my room with polka dots and my students quickly learned that I loved them. Now I get pictures or gifts with polka dots on them, or they will tell me that they saw a pocket book with polka dots on it while they were at the mall. The point is to show your students you care, and make them feel at home in your classroom. It will make your year a lot easier!

Anna Blakley: 4th

As a beginning teacher, I learned that it is important to try to enjoy every minute with your children. The children really do look to you as a role model and want you to show them that they are important and that you truly care about them. I also learned, it is very necessary to have humor within the classroom in order to survive. My children and I are always laughing together, and it makes the days go by quickly.

Miranda Kimsey: 5th

The one bit of advice I can give any new teacher as my first year comes to a close is "JUST BREATHE." I had many days when I thought, "what have I gotten myself into?" I simply had to learn to put everything in perspective. Celebrate the victories no matter how small. When you do this, you really see your class growing and you grow as a teacher. If you only focus on the negative (no matter how small they may be), you will never have a good day. If you just breathe—and let it out, everything gets much better. I got so frustrated with my class after Christmas that I cried in front of them. I was so embarrassed—but it helped. They really saw me as a person. I think it helped several of them realize that I do care deeply about each of them because no matter how much you say or show it, some of them need a gut-check for it to sink in. I guess, overall, my first year of teaching has taught me to just breathe, and that it is okay to be human.

Help!

Tenisea Griffin: 3rd

I have also learned that you must learn how to ask for help and that there are absolutely NO stupid questions. A lot of seasoned teachers take for granted all that they know. The only way to tap into their wealth of knowledge is to ask, ask, ask!

Jessica Woodward: 3rd

I think one of the most important things I have learned this year is that building relationships with those who surround you is important, especially the custodians, cafeteria staff, and office staff at your school. Someone once told me this and I thought it was crazy, but honestly, it is true! These are the people at your school you want to get to know. When you need something fixed, who are you going to call?... the custodians! When you have a question about clerical matters, who are you going to call? ...the office staff! Last but not least, when you need a little extra scoop of mashed potatoes, who is going to give it to you?...the cafeteria staff! Going out of your way, every once in a while, to let these people know they are appreciated is important. Hey, we like to know we are important and appreciated—and they do too!

Jessica Woodward: 3rd

Please do not be afraid of asking a question if you don't understand something. I think as new teachers, we feel such immense pressure to know what everything is and what we are supposed to do. Honestly, I think veteran teachers and faculty are so used to knowing how things are done that sometimes they forget that we don't know. So, if you have a question, ask it! Don't assume, and don't be afraid.

Lindsay Merritt: 3rd

Something I have learned while in my first year is that no one expects you to be perfect. Until just recently, I had been trying so hard to be the perfect teacher, and if someone gave me criticism, I got very upset with myself. Your first year is for learning new things! Take the time to reflect on your teaching, and learn all you can from other teachers around you!

Tonya Greene: 3rd

The one teaching tip I have found the most helpful is to find someone in your building that you feel comfortable with asking for help, bouncing new ideas off of, etc. This will make your life so much easier. Let's face it; we're not all perfect at what we do and will always need help and fresh ideas.

Alison Chrisawn: 5th

As a new teacher, you learn many things from many different people. Coworkers, friends, and family will be willing to give you information and advice when you need it. However, they might not know to do so unless you ask! Don't be scared to ask for help. You are not expected to know everything during your first few years. In fact, other people will admire your strength and leadership when you show concern for your classroom. Asking questions has become my saving grace during my first year of teaching!

Additional Note from E-mentor**Tamara Houchard: 3rd-5th E-mentor**

A good person to get to know is the curriculum director of your LEA. That person may have resources that could be of great benefit, or may be able to give you a heads-up on a workshop that you have expressed interest in taking.

Reflection**Sarah Woods: 3rd**

As I was in my apartment cleaning the other night, I was reflecting on how far I've come from the beginning of the year to now. My advice for next year's new teachers would be to KEEP ON TRUCKIN'! Hang in there! Teaching, and everything that goes along with it, will come to you. All of a sudden you will be teaching or sitting at your desk during your planning time and think, "WOW! I'm actually doing this! I am a teacher, and I'm loving it."

Jeff West: 5th

I'm not the type of teacher who likes to yell or nag, and my students know that; but when I am upset, I will let them know. Sadly, I have learned that I will probably look back on my first year of teaching and wonder what in the world I was thinking. Why did I do certain things? Can I have a redo on other things? Every year will be a new learning experience. A teacher will never, ever truly "get it" because students change. This is what makes the job interesting... and frustrating.

Nicole Cabe: 5th

I am human, and I do make mistakes—even some in front of the class. This is okay! The students need to see that you are human and not perfect; and, it is okay to admit you made a mistake, learn from it, and move on. I thought that making a mistake was the worst thing that could happen in my first year, but my mentor told me that it is going to happen, and you might as well look forward to it. No matter how long you have been teaching, the mistakes will come! Just take it, smile, and move on! There is a lot involved in teaching; but I have learned that it is how you take these things, learn from them, and move on, that truly helps you survive the year!

Ashley Hooper: 5th

JUST BREATHE. Sometimes it will seem like you've gotten yourself into the craziest profession ever—and you have—but, the rewards are worth it. If I can touch only one life, then I've accomplished my goal. Some children don't want to be at school, but if just one day you can catch their interest, they'll be more likely to listen to you and respect you. Always take into consideration that for the one bad day you've had, there have been four other days that week. And lastly, when it seems too much to bear, remember that the weekend is coming.



tips for **Middle Grades Teachers**

Planning and Preparation

Organizing: Day-to-Day

Laura Terry: MG SCI

For me, I am always easy to get up in the morning and fully functioning as my feet hit the floor; and I go to school 45 minutes before I am required to be there—this time is sacred to me! Without kids or other distractions, I get so much work done. I am no good at the end of the day and get nothing done those last 30 minutes of the work day.

By knowing how I work best, I do my plans on Sunday nights and grades and daily prep in the mornings. In the afternoon I do the easy stuff like clean up, write on the board, check e-mail—stuff that takes no brain energy.

Find what system works for you and play with it. Once I developed this routine, I had such a better sense of security that I would get all my planning done on time.

Organizing: Year-to-Year

Gianna Carson: MG E-mentor

Keep notebooks and/or folders filed with everything you do, so the next year you can better your plans. Write on your lesson plans if something went well—or did not go well—so that you can fix it the next semester, or year.

Planning for Next Week

Robbie Metcalf: MG LA

For me, there is no getting around the fact that I have to use my weekends to plan. (I also find it hard to do all I need to do in my planning period at school). If I have spent some time over the weekend setting out my objectives for the entire week, things go so much more smoothly. I also did quite a bit of work over the summer putting together a unit on fairy tales. I picked out and read fairy tales and wrote a general framework for my lesson plans. I am hoping once I get these frameworks in place for each unit, next year, all I'll have to do is some fine-tuning.

Kim Fletcher: MG MATH

Once a week, the seventh grade math teachers get together and we discuss where we are. This has proven to be very helpful, because we will often come up with different activities to share with one another. I keep my lesson plans about a week ahead. I found that I spent more time adjusting if I did any more than a week. And, there are even times I am still going through the constant process of changing throughout the week.

Amanda Shuler: MG MATH

As a first-year teacher, I do not want to be overwhelmed. I have picked two days a week and stay late to make sure the plans, and all the copies/supplies that I need, are available and ready for the following week. This makes my days less stressful, and I feel better about what is happening in the classroom. I have found that when I am prepared, the day goes smoother and the students stay on task much better. Being prepared allows me to be able to change, add to, and take away with ease—depending on how the students preformed on the concept being taught. I have also found that if they are moving quicker than planned I can continue with the next lesson and not miss a step. It is nice! I have decided to put more movement in the classroom, and I have some ideas that I am going to try out with games and activities.

Jonathan Krieger: MG SCI

Some of the strategies I have used thus far, and continue to use, are formative and summative assessments of student learning. I try to make my assessment tools as surprising as my lessons, if possible, for my students because there is no reason to always follow the status quo of testing. Usually giving myself two or three “long hour” days a week helps me stay afloat with my preparation and planning. Sometimes I do my lesson framework planning at home while I am relaxed, because this is when most of my productive thinking occurs.

Long-Term Planning

Kim Chastain: MG LA

I always plan with my fellow writing team members, and we map out our general lesson ideas for each upcoming quarter. It is so helpful to be able to discuss the ideas, topics, and projects we plan to work on during each grading period; and reflect on what worked or didn't work out so well for future reference. Since we teach different grade levels, we align our lessons in order to provide the students with all of the essential learning opportunities we can, without duplicating the content. Next, I plan my weekly lessons and begin gathering materials and resources. Participating in team planning sessions is a great way for new teachers to plan and prepare for optimal student learning.

Kristen Caplinger: MG LA

When I started this job a few weeks ago, I began planning. Wow, I felt behind! I tried to plan for the rest of the year and was running myself ragged. When I met my school mentor, she immediately told me to stop planning for the year! She encouraged me to plan 1-2 weeks at a time. This has been helpful, and I believe my lessons are positively impacted due to this. Now, I do have a sketch of what I hope to cover and a game plan for the rest of the year, but not in detail. It just helps me to know—even if it is only a sketch—where I am going. Who knows, maybe, just maybe, I might have some extra planning time and I will get to it! HA!

Laura Hyatt: MG MATH

I sat down over the summer and did a yearly plan in a table that I made in Microsoft Publisher. I didn't use a calendar because it was too spread out. Anyway, I included workdays and holidays, etc., and all I did was put in the curriculum I wanted to teach that week and an SCOS objective. I was able to stretch things out—like I want to do multiplying decimals for two weeks, etc. This seems very similar to just going by the pacing guide, but I made it my own; and I think that this planning has really helped me stay on course for getting the things done that I needed to do this year. It helps me in

my planning because I can set an approximate time limit and fill in enrichment and extra support when needed. I know it seems repetitive if your district has a pacing guide, but I have really found it helpful in sitting down to do my weekly plans.

Jonathan Krieger: MG SCI

The most important thing to me in my first year of teaching is to plan a diverse catalog of lessons, learn from my colleagues, and find out what works the best for me. Trying new things is a priority at this stage of teaching for me, so that my lessons don't become stale and my students don't become disinterested.

Miscellaneous

Amelia Inman: MG SS

I use a daily schedule, a "DO NOW" for when the students come in, etc. I also code each thing in a different color to help the students differentiate one from the other. Always aim to be ahead of the game. I try to stay at least two or three weeks ahead in my planning. This helps when there are snow days, extra meetings in a week, or anything else that might happen in my life.

Cindy Tipton: MG SS/MATH

I guess the one thing I could say about my first-year teaching is that consistency in the classroom, and beyond, is key to success. Being consistent in planning and teaching, as well as with discipline, has been a positive for me this first year. Coming into the classroom without any preparation was very difficult. I was hired the week school started and there was very little time to prepare; so I have spent lots of time organizing and being consistent in how and when I planned a lesson.

Classroom Environment

Community and Behavior

Kristen Caplinger: MG LA

Maintaining control of the class is #1! I had a bumpy first few weeks with one of my classes. I have found it essential to stand my ground and be firm (including enforcing the consequences for the misbehavior). At first, it was hard because I wanted to be nice and not discipline, but that was hindering the learning of others. I know being firm is what I have been doing for years at home with my own children, so I decided that I would do the same thing at school. There is a season for everything! Due to this change, I have seen remarkable progress, and I don't dread that class like I did.

Tara Mills: MG LA

My mentor this year introduced me to Fred Jones' *Positive Classroom Discipline*. She let me borrow her copy of the book towards the end of last year. I loved it so much that I got on the Internet that day and ordered myself a copy. I love this book. It provides wonderful insight as how to set up your classroom for positive discipline. I think every new teacher should own a copy of this book.

Fred Jones also has another book entitled *Tools for Teaching: Discipline, Instruction, and Motivation*. I love this book, too! I've got post-it-notes throughout, and I have used a highlighter too! In the very beginning he mentions how to deal with those "helpless hand

raisers.” In order to stay away from this or to avoid this situation in your classroom, you have to create an environment of independence. I find this funny. He also mentions “a full scale weaning program.” And, in section four of this book, he writes about raising expectations. Two things we can control: quality of work or diligence; and quality of work or excellence. “Classroom structure is the ground upon which effective management stands.” If you read anything in your first year of teaching, I strongly suggest Fred Jones!!!

Scarlet Carstensen: MG MATH

If I could help out a first-year teacher, I would tell him/her that the best teaching is done when you truly know your students. Do everything you can to get to know their interests, their strengths, their weaknesses, and even their fears. When you know all of these things, it makes teaching a breeze because you can develop meaningful lessons that appeal to all the students!

Laura Terry: MG SCI

Knowing my students and letting them know me sets the tone for my classroom. Every-day I am in the hallway (not to “watch” them, but to talk, hug, high-five, joke, or tease) greeting my students and I let my students get to know me.

Let your students know you and get to know them. I have such a connection with many of my students, I am anxious that the year is already ending!... Then I HAVE to get new ones. I love my students.

Rob Jordan: MG SCI

As part of my classroom management plan I give out tickets to students who are on task and doing what they are supposed to be doing. I collect the tickets each day, and at the end of the nine weeks we have a drawing for the reward. Also, during the middle of the nine weeks, I give a reward/movie day for students who don't have any grades below a 70; other students use the time to bring up their grades.

Dacia Harris: MG SCI

QUIET! This is the word that I use to repeat over and over and over again. I did not know how to get middle school students to quiet down. I rarely had an issue with my high school students—they were just quiet. I used to feel like pulling out my hair because I didn't know what to do. I have since reworked my classroom where the kids cannot enter the room if they are talking. If they do I send them right back out to the hall, and they lose their homework time. By establishing this routine the kids know exactly what to expect. You should hear them when another student talks out as he/she enters the room; they are so perturbed and ticked, that they start building the peer pressure to get them to be quiet. By establishing this expectation, I have seen such improvements with the students' on-task time. This increase in on-task time leaves less time I have to “manage.” I am no longer struggling to get their focus; it is already there. If you have not had a chance to implement this, then I recommend starting it. It is such a breath of fresh air.

Amelia Inman: MG SS

I always try to end my class with at least a minute left for my sixth-graders to talk to me, each other, or just relax and prep for the next class. They enjoy that time. If they are a little too talkative during the class, they will lose that time. It kills them!

Jared Bullock: MG SS

If I could pass on one piece of knowledge to new teachers it would be to have a well-planned “blueprint” for your classroom. Let me start out with the most important piece to the blueprint: YOU are in control of the decisions that go on within your classroom; do not ever allow the children to believe they are in charge of major decision-making. I am not saying that they cannot be involved in some of the decisions that are made—because they can—but just make sure you maintain the control.

The second part of this blueprint is to set up classroom rules and procedures that you would like your students to follow. Examples of procedures that I use in my classroom are the steps students follow when they arrive to class, where students place their completed assignments, etc.

The third and final piece of your blueprint is to prove to your students that you do what you say you are going to do. Students will begin to believe you after only a couple of times of putting your words to action. The worst thing that can happen to you is proving to your students that you will back down.

Cindy Tipton: MG SS/MATH

I have followed the PBS model my school enforced this year and feel that the consistency of the program, and my enforcement of it, has made a great year for my students and myself.

An Efficient Environment**Kristen Caplinger: MG LA**

Mrs. Chadwick’s (E-mentor) idea of hanging files is currently being used. I love them because each student has his/her own file. This file is the place for turning in homework as well as receiving graded work. If students are not finished with a project, he/she can put them in the folder as well. Very rarely do I have students who have “lost” their work.

Karl Kastelberg: MG SS

In my seventh-grade class, I typically have several students (not always the same ones) that are absent. Absences can be a huge problem for a number of reasons. I have frequently had students raise their hand once class has started and ask, “What did I miss?” I have a calendar in my room that tells what we did on each day in class and what/when assignments need to be completed. I also have a shelf in my room with a different cubby for each period, and three columns labeled “This Week,” “Last Week,” and “Extra Credit.” Whenever I use a handout in class, I put it in the “This Week” shelf, and move all other papers to the “Last Week” shelf on Friday. Every student knows what they need to do and where they need to find it when they are absent.

Physical Environment**Scarlet Carstensen: MG MATH**

Display student work and ideas! Every day we create a lesson poster that the students help make. This is not only an exit slip for the whole group, but it also turns into a display until that unit is finished. The students love seeing their work on the walls and use the posters as resources when they work on classwork.

Instruction

Serena Herter: MG LA

I have let students have choices for weekly project work. Once they have shown they can do the work under guided circumstances, then I let them choose what topics they want to sign up for, and finally they think about the weekly project topics and formats they will be creating for that week—and the rubrics that will be used to grade the projects for that week. So far, this year they've been very consistent and responsible in their work.

Robbie Metcalf: MG LA

This tip is for both effective instruction and management of the classroom. The best thing I have done this year is to have a classroom library. I have a small collection of my own personal chapter books, but I increase that number to about 200 by checking out books at Haywood County, Buncombe County, and the school library. I also use picture books. I have done a fairy tale unit, a nonfiction unit, and a fiction unit so far. If my lesson is shorter than I planned, or just did not go well, I have the students pick out a book and read. (Some days there is planned independent reading.) It gives the students an opportunity for movement in the classroom and increases student motivation to read because they are all allowed to choose their own books rather than being assigned something from the textbook.

Annie Stone: MG LA

For my 6th grade class, I concentrate on grammar two days per week, and writing for three days. I have another literature class for my 6th graders—where I read novels of varying genres all year long. With the grammar, I try to use the students' own writing papers to illustrate capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling. I find the fewer “canned” grammar exercises I use, the better their retention is. Writing includes journals—which I do not grade—and writing notebooks which encapsulates the writing process from start to finish. Publishing is the key: the students love to see their work illustrated, with a front and back cover page, to be shared in front of the class.

Annie Stone: MG LA

I begin class by discussing the day's agenda, which written on the board. That is followed by a GOAL. For example, today in Language Arts I wrote the following:

1. Write your rough draft for your “Animal” story.
2. Have two peers read your draft to look for the following:
 - a. Did the draft have a beginning, a middle, and an end?
 - b. Did you write three paragraphs with 6 to 8 sentences each as instructed?

GOAL: To become excellent writers by using the writing process!

Susanna Barbee: MG LA

I also begin class with the day's targets, and interestingly enough, students cited this as something they liked on a survey given a few months ago. I think students like to know what to expect out of a class. Furthermore, I don't have to answer the question, “What are we doing today?” a hundred times! Also, I start class with a bell ringer, which helps significantly as far as getting students settled and on task. The bell ringer may be revising a paragraph, writing sentences using homonyms, writing a paragraph based on a story starter, etc. On unusual days, when we don't have a bell ringer for some particular reason (i.e., we have to be in the library within ten minutes of class starting), I can see a huge difference. With no bell ringer, or some other type of focus activity, it is unclear when class begins.

Elaine Hyatt: MG MATH

One of my favorite strategies for teaching is allowing my students to “teach.” When they are teaching, I am there supporting them and asking questions. The other students enjoy being taught by their peers and I find that everyone, even my struggling students, want a turn to teach. This process is great for the students’ understanding, and it also helps me see where there is confusion or misunderstanding.

I begin each of my classes with four problems. These problems are a review of something we did the day before. The students work out the problems on their white boards. This enables me to see where they’ve made a mistake. They write their answers on their 4-Problem sheet. I let a student “teach” each problem. This helps me see where they are confused or where their strengths are. I also find that the other students listen well to their peers. My students are always eager to “teach.” I am teaching Title I Math. This has been a great confidence-builder for my students.

Jennifer Oetting: MG MATH

I like the idea of having the students do some of the teaching. I, too, start each class with a few “warm-up” problems, which we review as a class. But I find the same group of students participating. I have to really pull to get other students to respond, so maybe having the students act as teachers would help.

Megan Cogburn: MG MATH

I love for my students to interact with the materials and the concepts they are learning. For each lesson or each new concept that we learn, I try to have an enrichment activity after the lesson, or a fun, exciting activity for the students to do before we learn the concept. Presenting an activity before the lesson, I have found, really makes the kids interested in what you are about to discuss. I know it is hectic and much more time consuming to plan for these daily activities, but when the students are smiling and interested in what they are learning, your hard work has really paid off.

Amelia Inman: MG SS

I am on a sixth-grade inclusion/pull-out team. I use read-aloud, hands-on activities; “picture-walks” to introduce a topic; thinking maps; PowerPoint, etc.

The kids enjoy learning and then applying their knowledge to something, and allowing their other classmates to see their finished product.

Ben Davis: MG SCI

One of my best classroom management techniques is to mix things up every day. The students don’t come into class dreading taking notes or reading, if they don’t know what they will be doing in advance. This means they need to pay attention at the beginning of class to instructions for the day, and continue to stay focused while working on whatever assignment they have for that day.

Ben Davis: MG SCI

Since I’m a lateral-entry teacher, I had not been in a middle school classroom before August of this year. My previous teaching experience was with college students as a teaching assistant. In those classes, the kids were more ready to learn and listen.

I have learned to get their attention early and to try my best to vary the activities from day to day using labs, activities, research in the library, and/or anything that is not just the same old notes, worksheet, or test routine. This “learning by doing” has helped them to at least think about the real-world impact of what they are studying.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Kathy Proctor: MG E-mentor

Research shows that using a word at least three different ways will ensure that students learn the word and use it effectively in the future. By using words from the context of their classroom reading, you will help them be more successful in all of their subjects. I would suggest a fun activity or game to give students added motivation for really making the words a part of their vocabulary. I have found that students will learn difficult terms in order to succeed in the games.

Professional Responsibilities

Jared Bullock: MG SS

One of the most important tips that every new teacher needs to know is to win over the school secretaries—they can either make or break your day. The teachers at Waynesville Middle School are so lucky to have two wonderful secretaries. As teachers, we do not know how much they filter from entering our classrooms. In my opinion, they are the ones who run the school. So, my tip is to do everything you can do to win them over.

Lana Brooks – MG E-mentor

I know what you mean Jared. The secretaries at my school do so much for us everyday. The office people and the custodial staff have a very large impact on the teachers and students daily lives. A former professor told my class to be nice to the administration, but to make the secretaries and custodians our most important contacts. These people truly know “what’s happening” and more importantly they know how to fix “what’s broken.” Great tip for everyone!!

Jamel Anderson-Ruff - WCU MG E-mentor

Jared and Lana, this also models for students that everyone is important and the value of treating everyone with respect. Great community building that we also want to carry over into the classroom. Great observations!

Dayna Gerlach: MG MATH

As professionals it is our responsibility to make sure our students leave our classroom feeling better about themselves, and not worse or put down. If we can help a student feel better about some aspect of his/her life, especially at an age of trying to fit in, then we have done our job well.

Other Tips

Priorities

Thad Pickard: MG LA

I strongly believe that all first-year teachers need a healthy balance in their life, in and out of the classroom. During a NC TEACH class that I took with Mrs. Chadwick at Pisgah HS, I had a valuable experience. During one of our classes, we were visited by English teachers from Pisgah. And one of the teachers said, “You need to have a life outside of the classroom... You need to have fun yourself.”

As I approach my sixth month of the school year as a beginning teacher, I have to say that I am lucky that each week I have things to look forward to in my personal life. I play soccer twice a week, here in Waynesville, and in Asheville. I look forward to this because it is a healthy and fun outlet. I also make sure that I get a good rest each evening, eat some balanced meals (some fast-food now and then), and talk, talk, talk with other professionals.

For me, finding other teachers to talk with one-on-one has been crucial. I have found a group of teachers, not from my school, to talk to about my concerns, my failures, and my successes. I need these friends in my life—teacher-friends I can turn to, who don't know the students, teachers, or administrators, who I am talking about. This is very important to me. In this regard, I am free to speak my mind, and not worry about it getting back to the people I interact with every day. I highly recommend this. It has really been a life-saver at times.

Tara Mills: MG LA

I too had that same class with Mrs. Chadwick through NC TEACH, I also remember all of the teachers saying that you need to have a life outside of your job. We're human beings, mothers, fathers, girlfriends, etc. We have lives outside of teaching.

For me, I talk to other colleagues when I feel the need to let off some steam, so-to-speak. I go to the gym with a girlfriend. I enjoy spending an hour or more getting fit. I try to go to the movies with my fiancé and other couples. Enjoy life because you only get one chance to do what you want and to have fun!

April Woody: MG LA

Along with being a first-year teacher, I also took on two other positions. From the beginning of September through December, I was a cheerleading coach, and I now work two days a week in the After School program. Most days I don't leave school until after 6:00. Therefore, on Friday's I treat myself. I try to leave by 4:00, and I do NO school work on Friday night—no grading papers, no lesson plans, nothing but curling up in front of the TV with a good movie. This is like my vacation. I can't wait until Friday comes! I believe this also helps to get my mind back in the mode to prepare for the next week.

Cheryl Worley: MG SS

There are five friends I believe you must have in a school. These can be combined into three or more categories, but there are characteristics they must possess.

1. You must find someone to whom you can vent... and who feels free to vent back. This can be your next-door neighbor or someone in another building, but this is a stressful job, and you have to have someone in the same situation who understands what you're talking about.
2. You must have a teammate or someone on the same grade-level that understands just why those seventh-graders act that way.
3. You should have a friend in your subject, no matter the grade-level, who reminds you of why you teach the subject you do and what could be worse.
4. You must have a friend on the office staff. They make the world go round. Even if you don't agree with all of them, having a friend in the office makes your day go so much smoother. Never take advantage of them. They work hard, too!

5. You must have an older friend who's been in the business for a while, one who reminds you of the rewards of the job and who knows all the ropes. They are positively invaluable. I know, my "mother hen" has become a great friend!

These are a must in young teachers' lives. They make your day, week, month, and year go so much better!

Dacia Harris: MG SCI

The best suggestion I can give anyone is one that I have lived by as much as possible. Sleep, eat, and talk it all out. Things get very hectic for all teachers but more so for first-year teachers. Everything is SO HUGE: every kid who talks back, every test the kids fail, every parent who complains. Everything is life-or-death as a new teacher. The way to survive this is to talk, to ask questions of those who have been there longer. I cannot count the number of times I asked, "Is this normal?" I needed reassurance that I was doing what I could, when I could. This support is vital to self-preservation. Just as our kids need to know they are doing their work correctly, so do we. Ask questions whenever possible. Find the answers to anything that you are not 100% sure of. This decreases the stress level that you have to deal with on a daily basis. It is very helpful to know that it is not just me who deals with outbursts in class. With this knowledge I found strength to go back in the next day to deal with the situations that arise on a daily basis.

Next, it is important to eat; eat three, or more, meals daily. Pack a snack. Just like the kids get cranky without food, so do we. Yes, I eat in front of the kids and yes, sometimes they make me feel guilty, but it is worth it to them for me not to be running low on energy. I just explain that if I am cranky, then the class will be cranky, and no one wants that to happen.

And finally, sleep. We have so much planning to do, tests to grade, and labs to prepare that sometimes we neglect ourselves. Sleep is a natural way to eliminate stress; it helps your body reach homeostasis without the use of drugs or vitamins or any over-the-counter/holistic medicine. Sleep is a natural regulator. Tests have proven that students succeed more when they have the appropriate hours of sleep. Guess what? We do, too. We run herd on approximately 100 students daily, and we need to recharge our bodies. Get as much sleep as possible. One last thing: find a routine. Find one that allows for personal time, exercise, and deep breaths.

If you can establish these three relatively simple things, with all of the other plates you are balancing, your first year will be much less stressful and much more enjoyable.

Humor

Robbie Metcalf: MG LA

The most useful thing I have learned this year is to allow myself to make mistakes and laugh at myself when I make them. I have been a perfectionist all of my life, and I am tired of beating myself up for things that are not such a big deal to others. So this year I decided I was going to go into teaching with the attitude that I would definitely make some mistakes, but I would not agonize over them—I would just laugh at myself. This has helped de-stress my first year of teaching beyond what I could have hoped for. The other teachers laugh along with me, and it just doesn't seem that bad.

Jennifer Oetting: MG MATH

Finding the opportunity to laugh with the students has been very important to me. I find myself becoming very focused on the SCOS, getting through all of the material, staying on top of paperwork, etc., and then I have to stop and just relax a little with the kids. I really like my kids, and I don't want to become so wrapped up in classroom lessons and activities that I forget to enjoy getting to know them.

Help!

Lauren Kincaid: MG-HS ENG

I have only been in the classroom for two months, but I have quickly learned that my fellow teachers are an invaluable resource! I am a rather shy and reserved person by nature, and I very rarely thrust myself into social situations, but I found that making a point of eating lunch with my co-workers each day and spending at least a few minutes before and after school visiting with my co-workers has been so helpful. It often seems like they have the answer to any question I could ever ask. They offer constant support and guidance when I need it most. Being able to socialize and joke with my co-workers can take the edge off of the roughest of days.

Dayna Gerlach: MG MATH

I have found it to be important to use all of your available resources. Don't be afraid to ask a question, or get someone's opinion, if needed. Also, I think it is important to surround yourself with positive peers who will give you encouragement. Being a first-year teacher can be stressful at times, but if you use your resources wisely, it can help you get through the tough times.

Reflection

John Greene: MG MATH/SCI

As I have navigated the halls of first year (lateral-entry) teaching, I have been reminded how very similar my experiences have been to my plebe year at one of the five federal service academies (in my case, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy). I started this past summer in the NC TEACH program—with a big time of indoctrination—in which I was immersed in a whole new culture (the culture of teaching) and given a lot to learn in a very short amount of time. Then, there was the beginning of the school year, which brought more to learn and prepare for than was humanly possible—which taught me (again) how to discern what is really important and what can wait, how to budget time, how to manage stress, how to always be ready for surprise inspections, how to handle different groups of people who made different demands, how to be “first year” at something again, and on and on...

Throughout it all, there is a great need to maintain a sense of humor, and maintain a very tough desire to succeed—without that desire, it would be very easy to throw in the towel for a number of reasons. However, I am finding that my first plebe-year experience has well informed my “second” one, and I can now see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel with June somewhere out there! Of course, another thing that is helping is that baseball season has begun, and my coaching gives me two hours a day of sanity, and a break from everything else.

All in all, I know that when this year is over, it is something which I will be very proud of, and something that will help inform me for many, many years to come as I seek to grow and improve as a classroom teacher. Of course, the growth and learning will not stop when the second year begins—as it will present its own set of challenges, and maybe just a few more privileges. For anyone contemplating following in the footsteps of we who are first years, I would say, really make sure you are as prepared as possible—then jump in with both feet!

Ben Davis: MG SCI

Also, a tip for a new teacher is to remember that not every day will go smoothly. You will wake up at 2 am and remember that you have to do something for tomorrow, and that's fine—it happens to all of us. Just know that YOU CAN DO IT, and everything will turn out just fine.

Kristin Crawford: MG MATH

The main thing I could say as a new teacher is to not come into teaching the first week and expect everything to be perfect. To be honest, I was scared to death during my first week. I was not sure if what I had planned would work, or if we would even come close to finishing what I had planned. What if the kids did not understand? What if they hate my teaching style? My suggestion is to take things as they come. Why worry yourself in the beginning when you do not even know what is going to happen? If something is not working, change it. If you find the kids learn better when you teach a certain way, then start spending more time using that strategy. Don't stress. There are so many different things you have to get ready during your first couple of weeks, so don't stress over the small things that can easily be changed.

Jonathan Krieger: MG SCI

My tip for new teachers is to be patient with not only your students but with yourself. There is a never ending string of learning experiences throughout your first year of teaching; and these experiences, although difficult, are definitely worth the strain.



tips for High School Teachers

Planning and Preparation

Organizing: Day-to-Day

Lauren Allen: HS SCI

When I design my lesson, I frequently color-code according to my color-coded pacing guide. Example: Ch. 1 is on blue paper, 2 on pink, 3 on yellow, etc. I also have a place on my lesson plan for reflection so that when I go back the following semester to revise/re-teach, I will have made myself notes for what worked and what didn't—a tool that has been VERY helpful this time around.

Alicia Owens: HS SS

It is essential to over plan. If you over plan, you have a variety of tasks to choose from if one of your activities were to bomb, or not be as good as you thought it would be in class. This way, especially in EOC classes, you make sure to cover the content and not lose a day of important content.

Gwen Smith: HS SS

When planning, I always plan more than I will use on a daily basis. That way if we run into extra time, I don't have to think, "Oh my gosh, what am I going to do for 15 minutes?" I have a backup plan ready to go!

Kimberly Williams: HS FACS

You can never over plan! Always over plan to avoid down time in your classroom. I try to plan about 12 ten-minute activities per 90-minute class. This includes lecture, class discussion, and various assignments and activities. I try to "change gears" every 10 minutes or so, to avoid the students becoming bored and losing interest.

Edith Callahan: HS VOC

Tip for New Teachers: Use your planning period for planning. The days can be filled with total chaos, but if you can get into the habit of using your planning period for planning, it decreases the work that you have to take home.

Jenny Roseboom: HS SPAN

I drive forty minutes, one way to school, so I have to get up very early! I am not a morning person! I usually end up getting to school just before 8 am. To compensate for that, each

afternoon before I leave, I review my plans and make sure that everything is in order for my next day. I change the date on the board. I even have first period's warm-up written on the board and ready to go. When I walk in on any given morning, my classroom is ready and my students have their directions waiting. It helps for a smooth transition from home to school!

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Jenny Lytton: HS E-mentor

My biggest piece of advice is to organize all of the resources that you are making and finding from other places. This will make your life easier and easier each year. You'll be able to readily access these materials year-after-year.

Tiffany Smith: HS E-mentor

Anytime I try a new activity, I especially try to have a backup activity—just in case. I still have to remind myself to gather a few extra resources and plans for the unexpected. I've had plenty of activities that I thought were going to be spectacular turn out a completely different way in class. You can't just say we'll try again tomorrow; you have to take advantage of class time. Over-planning is a great skill to learn.

Organizing: Year-to-Year

Summer Passmore: HS MATH

As a high school math teacher, I know that my classes will vary from semester to semester. However, as I plan for a new class, I type the notes and keep an extra copy of quizzes and tests to put into a binder for that class. I know that when I teach the class the next time, I will add to my binder and have different options, but the fact that I will have a basis each year is comforting. Last year, during my internship, I taught Algebra I. I have a 3-inch binder full of materials that were used in that class. However, as I began teaching it this year, I have noticed that I have already begun to add to my collection. This is a good way to cut down on the amount of time spent planning each year. Don't get me wrong. I still plan daily, but it is no longer a four- to five-hour job. My planning period is long enough.

Gloria Murdock: HS SCI

With my biology class, I have found that keeping all of my resources together in notebooks has really helped. Every chapter's notes, activities, labs, and readings are all put together, and any time I need to make copies it isn't difficult to find it. I find time on the weekends to put things together. I still haven't found out if I want to do it on Saturday or Sunday.

I always read chapters before I start teaching them and take my own notes. This way I feel prepared and comfortable with the material. I always keep my notes and keep them in the same folders with student notes, labs, and activities. This way it doesn't take so long to read the material the next time I teach it.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Knox Hardin: HS E-mentor

When I began planning with the "binder" technique, I would reflect about what worked well or needed to be modified. I did this with a "red" pen so that it would "stick out" the next time I used it.

Long-Term Planning

Ron Koppenheffer: HS MATH/SCI

I use an Excel spreadsheet to plan out my pacing guide. I set up the school calendar allowing for weekends, early dismissals, work days and holidays. Then I enter the number of days I would like to allocate for each topic I plan to cover. Once these are added, you can tell whether you will have extra time or need to adjust the length of some topics. As part of the guide, I also add in the daily schedule of what needs to be covered, what classwork will be done, and homework. (With the homework slotted in, it is easy to create a homework assignment sheet for the class.)

Because Excel will allow me to add rows, I can add in snow days or any other planned activities, and any other unplanned happenings. By inserting these, you can see how that will affect your overall pacing guide, and see what needs to be adjusted. Also, if you find you are spending too much time on a topic, you can insert the extra time and then adjust, as needed, to still complete the year.

Heather Roper: HS SS

I go ahead and plan out my entire semester on the calendar we were given at the beginning of the semester. I set goals for myself—like, be through the Legislative branch by a certain date. Now, this plan does not have everything that I am going to do all semester written on it, but it gives me a guideline and helps me stay on track. I then try to take it one unit at a time and lay out what I will be doing; that way I can see exactly what I am doing and will be doing. It may not help anyone else, but I have been able to stay so much more organized this way. It also helps me to prepare the kids that know ahead of time they are going to be out on a certain day; then I can give them an idea of what they will miss.

Miscellaneous

Dan McKinney: HS SS

Make sure to keep written records on your students to prove that they are either doing well or failing. Having these records to pull up at a parent/teacher meeting will save you from hassle, and show the parent that you are organized and wanting the best for their child.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Kelly Pace: HS E-mentor

Although this is not a strategy, it might be useful for some of you. We know that all successful teachers plan, and plan, and plan! However, do not be afraid to change your plans. As you become more experienced and comfortable with your curriculum, you may also become more open to trying different approaches and projects. While you're explaining an assignment, a student may ask a question that sparks an idea. At times, this will lead to a different twist or desired outcome for your assignment. Don't be afraid to embrace this change, even though it was not in your original plan. Of course, this is not always practical or desirable. But, as teachers, we should always be looking for new ideas. Only you know the dynamics of your students and classes, and you should feel free to modify your plans for individual classes.

Classroom Environment

Community and Behavior

Galadriel LaVere: HS ENG

One of the most effective classroom management strategies (if you'd call it that) I've accomplished is having "real" relationships with my students. I try to let them know that I'm human and really care about them. I'm honest with them about myself and what I think—only if it's appropriate. They really respect being dealt with on a more mature level and, in turn, respect you for treating them that way.

Casey Kruk: HS ENG

One thing I have found success with is letting students know I am human, too. I remember talking about how good the food was at a restaurant and having a student say, "Teachers go out to restaurants? I didn't know that." It is funny, but at the same time a little sad that students don't think of teachers as "normal people." I try to keep a relaxed, comfortable (but not too comfortable) environment in my classes that lets students know it is alright for them to ask questions that might be a little "out there." I think it helps them to know that people sometimes have questions or concerns that a lot of other people have as well. As long as the conversation goes in a direction I feel is appropriate in relation to class, we can run wherever we want.

Jennifer Payne: HS MATH

I love for my students to interact with me and with each other, so I try to leave time for them to do just that. I give them certain problems at the end of the class to work on in small groups, and I walk around and help each of the small groups. The kids love that they aren't listening to me the entire class time! If the students have difficulty staying on task, I make it into a game and give extra "points" to the group that have the most correct answers when they are completed.

Alicia Owens: HS SS

It can be tricky to maintain discipline within a class; you must always address issues immediately to make sure that there is a clear understanding of the expectations in the classroom. Students are good at bullying, because that is how they feel better about themselves. And they will try to use it on everyone—including the teacher.

Gwen Smith: HS SS

When you have rules in your class, don't bend them for one person. Just because you may like Student A more than you do Student B, always give every student the same consequences. If you tell your students that you are going to do something, do it! Don't try and back out of it; they will lose their trust in you. Consistency is a must in the classroom!!!

Judy Wilson: HEALTH OCC

One of the important things I've learned in teaching is the importance of being consistent. If you are consistent, you will be fair. Students tend to watch for this in teachers. They want to be treated consistently and fairly. Treatment of unfairness can have an impact on a student's self-esteem and attitudes regarding education in general. At times this is not as easy as it may sound, because we also have to be aware of individuality. Also, it is not easy to watch a student fail in a task because you are having to maintain consistency and fairness within the group.

Sarah Weresuk: HS SCI

As a first-year teacher, I have battled discipline and wanting to be receptive to students. I went into my first year knowing that I could not be a sucker and let students run over me, but that is exactly what I found myself doing. I didn't want to be the "mean" teacher that everyone hates, but I have realized that you don't have to be mean, just consistent. Expectations are made and so are consequences. It is not mean to discipline a kid who has acted in a way that they know is inappropriate. I have also realized that the students who are not misbehaving also expect consistency from me as a teacher. How are they to learn if I am not in control? How can I expect them to show respect to their classmates, me, or even themselves if I don't know how to demand it? I like to have a lot of fun in class, but without order, it is pure chaos. That is not fair to other students, or me. To conclude, it goes back to what I have always believed, and am finally beginning to practice: A good teacher should be firm, but friendly!

Steven Barchie: HS MATH

There is a proverb that goes something like "People don't care what you know until they know that you care." My first period class had become adversarial. They came in wanting only to socialize, and when I forced them to work, I got a lot of resistance. Many would try to argue with me and were defiant and disrespectful. I realized I had lost them and that getting them back would be very difficult.

To fix the situation I identified some key players in the social dynamics of the class. I employed a divide and conquer strategy by getting them alone (one by one) and going over their goals for school and for life. I tried to figure out ways I could help them and, in return, I asked for their cooperation in class. We agreed that they would mess up from time to time, and I promised I would forgive if they would apologize. My forgiveness would be instant and unconditional as long as they recognized their need to apologize and were willing to go from there.

The last two from the group I had identified came in for extra help after school. We laughed, joked, and did some math. They left with a new understanding of proportions and a new understanding of my care for them. That was yesterday, and today was a good day. Just 19 more good days and they will earn a game day. I think I can afford one day a month for reward. I know I can afford good days where we can get a lot done. A positive attitude sure helps the students, when trying to understand new math concepts.

Misty Farmer: HS MATH

I had one student this year that really struggled to do well in my class. He came back after Christmas and started doing really well on his homework. After he turned in the chapter test, he was very anxious to see what he made on the test. After the class left, I picked his test up to grade it first. He made an 88 on it. I was so proud of him that I took his paper to lunch and bragged to other teachers on what a wonderful job he had done. When I handed the test back to him the next day, I told him how proud I was and his face lit up. He looked at me and said, "All of my teachers today told me that I had done a good job." He had the biggest smile on his face that I had ever seen from him. So I suggest you tell other teachers to tell one of your students that you were bragging on him/her; and tell him/her about the good job that he/she has done. If the student knows that you are proud and that all the other teachers are also supporting him/her, the child seems much more motivated.

Misty Farmer: HS MATH

One mistake that I feel that I made as a first-year teacher is at the very beginning of the year. I didn't take a couple of days to get to know my students and really introduce myself to them. I think that during the first couple of days you should go over procedures that you are going to expect each day when they come in your classroom and then have a lot of time to get to know your students. Play a get-to-know-you game or something that will be fun to them.

Kevin Mead: HS SCI

I have found that the best classroom environment for freshmen is a relaxed environment. I have spoken with numerous other teachers about this subject and my views seem to differ from more experienced or veteran teachers. By no means is my room chaos, but I would say that my students have a fair amount of freedom within my room. I expect participation, kindness, effort, and responsibility, but I also allow joking around and having fun. When I was in school, I hated the regimented classroom with no leeway. My classroom has structure, and objectives are accomplished but by no means would I call it a regular classroom.

I have two assistants during the course of the day with my EC students and both have praised me for my style of teaching. I've been told that I'm always positive and have a way of getting more out of their students, specifically, more than other "strict" teachers. We must remember that learning is important, but if you don't establish a rapport with each and every student it doesn't matter how great of a teacher you are. Each student just wants to be cared for and understood. And sometimes, as much as we may not want to do it, finding their level may be the best way to show kids that you care.

Pam Pattillo: HS FACS

1. Always dress the part of a teacher. Your dress should be conservative, yet appear that you have put enough thought into your clothing that the students know you take your job seriously - professionally.
2. Let students know that it is important to be on time by demonstrating promptness yourself.
3. Carry yourself with confidence, yet allow yourself to be warm enough for the students to be comfortable with you.
4. Always give your students a smile. It helps them to know you care, and they will feel more comfortable with you.

Barclay Taylor: HS Science

Having rules and guidelines in your class is of the utmost importance. If you begin with a strong classroom management plan in the beginning, time and heartache will be saved further in the year. My peers and mentor have been so beneficial in guiding me through the process of allowing my classes to flow without constantly dealing with behavioral problems or disruptions. Everyone hates to be the mean teacher on the hall, but emphasizing to students the rules of the class sets precedence for the rest of the year. I feel that this was my largest problem. Teaching is the easy part, but managing your classroom will always be an obstacle.

Sonya Teasdale: HS CTE

I create and maintain an effective classroom by staying organized and presenting classroom routine and procedure in a positive way. My computer lab classroom is arranged to meet all the needs of my students. I conduct my classes efficiently by managing

my class time and always using a six step lesson plan. As a teacher, I feel that good communication and teamwork between school and home is important in developing self-discipline and appropriate behavior. To ensure that the student is in a safe environment that is beneficial to learning I make sure that my plan of action is verbally and thoroughly communicated on the first day of class. Students know that if they violate my discipline plan, I have consequences in place. I praise students in front of the class and I reprimand students in private. I try to create an atmosphere of consistency and mutual respect.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Kelly Pace: HS E-mentor

The classroom environment has a large impact on the success of students. As teachers, we do need to be very consistent and fair. Students pick up on these concepts very quickly. Also, it is important to me that students consider me “approachable.” I encourage questions and suggestions, and as my students learn that I will respond in a supportive manner to them—remember that this does not necessarily mean “yes”—they become more open to discussions and trying new methods. A positive environment can produce some amazing student work.

Tiffany Smith: HS E-mentor

I prefer to discuss incidents with students privately instead of giving up my instructional time, or giving them the satisfaction of getting additional attention and distracting the class even further. Try to be consistent, fair, and honest. Students will respect what you are trying to accomplish. Classroom management is a skill that takes time to figure out; you have to find your own style (I’m still working on mine.).

An Efficient Environment

Beth Ross: HS VOC

Sometimes if students are working together in groups or if we are working outside, it can be really hard to get everyone’s attention when I need it. I have found that using a cowbell works really well because it is loud and the sound carries well. Everybody knows what it means when they hear the bell.

Haley Hampton: HS AG

My students have a notebook that they journal in everyday, keep their notes in, and also keep all handouts in, etc. From the very first day, they start using these notebooks, and it is the very first thing they are supposed to pick up when they come in the door. After the bell rings, they journal about a topic that I have put on the board. I play music while they write, and they write quietly for the entire length of the song. This gives me time to take roll and do the other “administrative” tasks that teachers have to do. Then we discuss the journal topic, which is usually either a review of what they learned yesterday or a way of finding out what they know about the topic we are starting that day. This system allows the students to know exactly what is expected of them, and they know what is coming next. This helps with classroom management and getting class started on time every day.

Sonya Teasdale: HS CTE

Use procedures! Implementing a set of procedures for various activities in your classroom will help your students understand what is expected of them during your class. Students need to know what to do when they enter your classroom and what to do before they leave your classroom—such as, completing a bell ringer when they come into your class, turning in homework in the appropriate trays, transitioning properly between activities, understanding computer lab responsibilities, cleaning their work stations, etc. I have

found that my students tend to work better, and are better behaved, when they know what to expect. This keeps disruptions down and gives me more time to teach and the students more time to complete their activities.

Lynn Barry-Toth: HOE CTE

I set aside time in my class periods for correcting work, whether it is tests, quizzes, or assignments. It helps to give the students instant feedback, answer questions, or correct a misunderstanding of the material. It also helps me keep up with grades and graded papers. Everyone must put up their writing instruments and check off with a red pen; they cannot do the work in red pen. When a student gets an answer wrong, I then ask him/her to explain to me why he/she thought the answer was right, or tell me why the wrong answers wouldn't be correct. Very often they find that they were misinterpreting the question asked, and it helps them develop stronger test-taking skills.

Additional Note from E-mentor

David Curtis: AG E-mentor

I find that my students do best when they understand what is expected of them. I use a list of procedures at the beginning of each new class. I tell the students that they are not rules, but just how things work in the room, so they will know what's expected of them when they come in. I use a bell ringer, or opening question that is a review of what we covered in the previous class as a warm up at the beginning of each class. It is worth 25% of their grade. I find that if the student takes the time to do the opening question, they will do okay in the rest of the class.

And the most important thing is that I keep my room clean and organized—same with the greenhouse. Students will pick up on a messy room as one that they can “slide” in. If the teacher doesn't care about the learning environment, it sends a quick (and poor) message to the students.

Physical Environment

Marlean Machado: SPAN

I have recently moved up from a cart in one school where I teach, to a classroom—for two of the three days I am there. I was excited about it at first. I admit it is a lot easier for me to keep up with things and be more organized for my students. However, the classroom I use, was a spare room where teachers placed old textbooks and furniture they no longer wanted. Therefore, I am trying to organize and teach in a cluttered and messy room.

There has been a tremendous difference in my students' behavior. Before, in the classroom, they were loud when working in groups and walking around, and quiet when asked to be. Now, I believe, since there is a mess in the room, they are messy with the room. This might sound a little strange, but I honestly believe it has to do with their change in behavior. We have slowly taken items out of the room, and the students are getting a little better, not like before, but better. So, my advice or strategy for the classroom environment would be to make sure the room at least looks organized and prepared, otherwise the students will connect you to the room and believe they can be unorganized, messy, and chaotic.

Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle: HS ENG

While I always knew that certain classrooms made students feel more or less comfortable, I didn't realize what a complex issue classroom environment was. I cringe at

assigning seats, but found that for freshmen, it is the only way to go. The best advice I received was to wait until the second or third day. That allows you time to see who should not be around whom, for effective learning. I prefer my students to be in semi circles (or a circle if room allows). This way we can see each other. Groupings of desks caused problems with students' backs to instruction and constant talking. It just depends on the lesson. Unfortunately, it is impossible to move desks for each class based on the lesson.

Other than desk arrangements, I recommend lots of color (posters or paint, if it's allowed) and clearly marked turn-in boxes. Finally, and this might seem odd, I try to keep an air freshener in my room. Not an overpowering one, but one that smells like orange candy. The kids like that the room smells nice when they come in, and it makes the experience a little more bearable. Odd, I know...

In general, the classroom should feel comfortable and user-friendly. Students have access to materials like dictionaries and outside reading materials. They know what materials are free to use without permission and which ones they need to ask permission to use. This should be established very early on, so there is no question.

They love seeing their own work displayed and I have a board where I post newspaper articles and pictures featuring students. This is my wall of fame. They appreciate knowing that I understand that they have another life outside of class.

Ben Owens—HS MATH/SCI

I recently began changing the classroom seating arrangement in one of my algebra classes from a “traditional” set-up (rows of tables and chairs) to a grouping of tables. The class has 17 students, and I have created three groups of four, and one of five. I grouped the students to ensure that every table had a cross-section of ability. This arrangement has now allowed me to have more group work, including students checking and helping each other versus my having to try to attend to everyone's question at once. I have also noticed that the grouping has led to more peer pressure to ensure everyone does his/her work (including homework) in a high-quality manner. The little bit of increased socializing that is inevitable when students essentially sit facing one another is greatly off-set by the increased focus on the lessons. I've been testing this approach for a couple of weeks now and intend to duplicate it in my other classes.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Kate Birthright: SPAN E-mentor

Creating the environment that reflects how you want your students to feel and act is so important, and I think it is often overlooked! Small things like changing bulletin boards, decorating your door, using colors and patterns that reflect different feelings, etc. It was easy for me to become lazy with this because there is so much to be done! However, I know that every time I did something different and put effort into the appearance of my classroom, I felt so much better! It was more fun to look at the walls and see those new pictures of exotic places or see the new bright fabric on my bulletin board or have the new door decorations greet me early in the morning!

And certainly, the physical arrangement of the room is so vital. I cringe when I see the desks so neatly in rows—because to me it feels too rigid and unfriendly—and from what I have learned, it is not the most effective layout for student learning either.

I think peeking in at other teachers' classrooms and seeing what they are doing—asking questions, observing, etc.—and working on developing our own classroom environments should be an ongoing challenge we give ourselves!

Instruction

Caleb English: HS SCI

I always try to incorporate some type of technology in my lessons. It keeps the kids engaged and sometimes can make the day go by easier.

Gwen Smith—HS SS

I use a variety of games that the kids love! Most high school students are competitive. Ninety minutes in a chair is boring to them, so I use games to get them up out of their seats and moving around. Mostly I use them for review. There are tons of games out there. They stay awake, are all engaged, having fun, and learning at the same time!

Pam Pattillo: VOC

In an effort to improve VOCATS scores, I begin each class period with a five to ten minute review of the previous day's material. I either throw a koosh ball around the room or use the eggs that come with the *Promethian* board; this type of hands-on learning engages my students, and when they take the unit test, even the apathetic student seems to score better.

Don Thompson: HS AG

Each course I teach has a completely different mix of students. Given Bloom's Taxonomy as a reasonable hierarchy to follow, I find that in one class the retention level is so basic that I will be lucky to get the students to retain much data. The idea here is to keep going and to add plenty of hands-on learning materials throughout the course to keep reinforcing the objective of the lessons. This is for Horticulture 1. In Horticulture II, I will use hands-on greenhouse production to stimulate learning rather than lecturing, as the students reject any kind of formal lecture. In Careers and Management, I have the students build a model train set to simulate the business world and how money and products flow. Between the hands-on construction techniques they need to learn and the chance to see a community in miniature, I hope to stimulate their willingness to learn.

Kimberly Allison: HS SS

One teaching strategy that I have used this year has been to incorporate games into review time—such as Jeopardy, (which is excellent), and BINGO, which is good for vocabulary review. Students enjoy the games, and so do I. It's a good break from the usual routine.

Brent Lance: HS SCI

I try to find out what my students are interested in. Then, I relate science content to that. For instance, I have several students who are interested in automotive technology. So, I have been relating topics like viscosity and force to automotive scenarios. I also have several students interested in the health sciences, so I use a lot of nutritional and medical terminology to phrase questions. I think that this helps them understand the content more completely and, at the same time, makes it more interesting by using things students actually care about.

Laura Simmons: HS FACS

Since I am a lateral-entry teacher and I did not get the formal instruction with student teaching, I have had to rely on other teachers and workshops to help me with classroom instruction. I have learned, after my first semester of teaching, that using an outline with

blanks to take notes on a topic works best for my classes. I write the topic on the board and ask for student participation to get the answers. It has also worked well with my classroom management by helping the students stay on task. If they start to have their own conversations while I am writing on the board, I say, "If I am writing, what are you doing?" and they all respond, "Writing!" For many of the students, this works well to get them back on task and let them see when it's their turn to take and give answers, and when it's my turn.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Dennis Hembree: WCU MATH E-mentor

I've tried to encourage some organization along these lines, with little success. It makes sense to me for teachers to share these ideas and activities, but beyond that, why not organize? I would like to see all the mathematics teachers at a school agree on activities for selected lessons. That way, when a 7th-grade teacher begins a topic, he or she knows that in the 6th grade, students not only studied topic X, but also that they all did activity Y. The 7th-grade teacher can then ask students to remember that activity and perhaps build on it or connect it to a new topic or branch of mathematics. I've only worked at the high school level and have never seen a group of mathematics teachers take this step that, to me, makes so much curricular sense.

Kathy Stamey: HS E-mentor

To improve VOCATS scores and to aid with retention of material, I make most of my tests comprehensive. I also allow students to rewrite test questions and answers after each test to bring up their scores and help with retention. I have students write the question and correct answer twice and then write a positive statement about the question. It's a really good way to bring up test scores for students who do not do well on tests. I give them one point for each question they do the three-step re-write on.

Professional Responsibilities

"Extra" Duties

Lauren Allen: HS SCI

So frequently I catch myself dreading lunch duty or parking lot duty or whatever the duty is that day; but in retrospect I remember that it is during this time that I am frequently able to socialize with the students, to get to know them and watch how they interact with one another. So although the duties seem tedious and mind-numbing, try to think positively and see all that you can gain during the duty.

Gwen Smith: HS SS

There are many responsibilities for a new teacher. Keep a planner to remember certain dates, such as bus duty, parent-teacher conferences, faculty meetings, athletic events, etc. Keep up with your grading; this makes it easy to get your grades in on time.

Clint McElrath: HS SS

Probably the most important thing I have learned as a first-year teacher so far is to manage your time wisely. I coach three sports and have two preps, so I've had to learn how to manage them all together. It was a little difficult at first, and still is at times, but for

the most part I have been able to effectively manage my time between both coaching and teaching. I always try to use every chance I get to either focus on school or coaching. However, school always comes first in this situation. That's just one thing I have gained from my first year of teaching.

Amanda Waldroop: HS SS

As a first-year teacher, I have learned to be active about, (and appreciate in return), being willing to pick up extra slack when other faculty members are in a bind. When other teachers are out sick or with family emergencies, or administrative staff go to workshops or meetings (as the saying goes: "When the cat is away, the mice will play,") it's important to JOYFULLY be willing to take on a few extra responsibilities. Inevitably, you will fall into this position every now and then, and it's helpful because if you are out sick or need to go to a workshop, those other staff members will gratefully pick up your slack in return!

Miscellaneous

Beth Ross: HS VOC

In order to keep track of all of the things that have to be done outside of class (like meetings), I always try to keep my calendar updated. I'm sure everyone else does that also, but there is something else that I do. Each day after my last class is over, I search my calendar for the next day's activities and write them down on a post-it note. Coming in the next morning to find my list of things to do makes for an easier start to the day.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Kate Birthright: SPAN E-mentor

I think of involvement in the community, active role in sports, clubs, etc., and it can be overwhelming to think of taking any of that on as a beginning teacher. My advice would be to take on additional responsibilities at a slow pace! Be sure you have good support, and count on it taking up twice as much time as you think it will! Doing things to support your students and your school can be incredibly rewarding. For me, going to dinners, seeing plays or musicals, going to sports events—these were all I took on in my second year, and it was great because I could work it into my schedule without being overwhelmed. I hated saying no to coaching or taking on a club—but it felt like what I needed to do for me. Listen to yourself, be sure you don't get burnt out—but, also know that any time you see your students outside of the classroom will be incredibly important to them (and anyone who attends your school), and will also bring you closer to them—which is awesome!

Kathy Stamey: HS E-mentor

I believe it is very important for vocational teachers to interact and become acquainted with their local community professionals. My classroom is filled with donated equipment from our local hospital, nursing home, pharmacy, and physicians' offices. These individuals are also a great help with presentations, fundraisers, competitions, etc.

Kathy Stamey: HS E-mentor

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage new teachers to provide your students with the great experience of participating in a student organization. HOSA and other CTE student organizations provide great leadership opportunities for our students. Being a CTE advisor requires additional work but reaps great rewards both personally and professionally.

Other Tips

Robbie Robles: HS ENG

One of the most useful things I've learned in this past year of teaching has been to learn when to be a teacher and when not to be. I use the term "teacher" to mean the person standing up in front of the room and keeping, (or enforcing as the case may be), control over the classroom (as many a stereotype of a teacher does). Sometimes the students or, more in particular, a student, needs the teacher to step back slightly and just listen or be kind. In several occasions—when I could tell that this really was a different situation than the normal occurrence—I've done this, and it has helped tremendously with the student's willingness to listen to me when I'm having to keep people quiet and when I'm teaching.

In a teacher's personal life, I've found it is imperative that you find something that you like to do at least three times a week that has nothing to do with students or school, and actually make sure that you do it. Every time I get into that funk of "I can't wait until (fill in the next school break) comes," it has been when I've been 85% or more focused on just school in my life. There is more to our lives other than school; and while it is an important part of each of our lives, (hopefully), I'm a strong believer that extremes are bad and that if you spend all of your energy in one place, you will eventually condition yourself to not like—or even despise—that which you do.

Gwen Smith: HS SS

Keep enthused about your subject. Your students will see it, and they will enjoy it as well. Always hold high expectations for your students!!! You will stay late at school, come in early, and do work at home—it will get easier as time goes on. Remember, teaching is what you make of it!

Barclay Taylor: HS SCI

During my first year of teaching, I found myself continually staying up late planning lessons and activities for my students. Coupling this with all the other responsibilities and obligations of a new staff member created time constraints. My suggestion is to take some time for yourself so that you don't get burned out. I made the mistake of going and going constantly. I was ready for a break well before the middle of the year. There will be days that you just have to leave your work at school to refresh yourself for the next day.

Haley Hampton: HS AG

Tip for new teachers: keep on keeping on! Whether you are having a really good first year or a really bad one, you just have to keep plugging along. If it's really bad don't quit or think teaching isn't for you—you just have to survive that first year. Even if it's going really well for you, you will still get tired and burned out. That is okay—it doesn't mean that you don't have passion for the job; it just means that you are giving it all you've got, which is a great thing! But you still need to make time for yourself.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Kate Birthright: SPAN E-mentor

Take time to listen to yourself. Listen to your personal, social, and emotional needs. Feed your soul with what makes you grow. Take care of yourself! I was so tempted to veg out after a rough day—and still am!—but I have to remind myself that MOST of the time reading a book, doing a devotional, going for a walk/run—doing other things that feed my soul—will leave me much more refreshed and relaxed than an hour in front of the TV.

It's hard to hear yourself when the TV is on! Now, this does not mean TV is all bad—just think about how you spend your down-time (however little it may be!) and be sure it's really what is best for you!

David Curtis: AG E-mentor

To be an effective teacher I find that you need to separate yourself from school, students, and other work-related stuff, and do something for yourself and your family. Don't bring work home; instead, spend some time doing the things you used to do. Visit some place or try a new sport or cook a different meal; and then, if you want, you can share those non-school adventures with your students. Of course, I'm telling you all of this while I'm in the middle of working on my National Boards, so I'm going to practice what I preach after I mail in my entries.

Adrian Holt: HS E-mentor

Make sure that as a beginning teacher you don't work all the time! Force yourself to take time off during the weekend. The weekend is your time, not your students' time. Try your best to save this time to relax: go for a hike, go to a movie, go out with friends your own age! Being around high school students can be so emotionally draining. It is nice to communicate with some peers for a while, but DON'T coop yourself up at your computer all weekend working on lesson plans. I know it's hard sometimes, because there is always so much to do or so many papers to grade, but save time for you and your family.

Humor

Brandy Kiger: HS ENG

The most useful thing I learned was that you HAVE to have a sense of humor. You have to be able to laugh at your kids even when they drive you crazy. And, you most certainly have to be able to laugh at yourself.

Help!

Brandy Kiger: HS ENG

Begging and borrowing from other teachers is another essential must-do. Beg, borrow and steal all you can. You'll never make it if you can't ask for help. I've been to my department head's room every day since I started, and she has been the most amazing resource I could have ever hoped for—along with my mentor. Thank God for them both. Always take advantage of the resources at hand. The teachers who have been teaching for 20+ years are the ones who've seen it all and can give you the best advice.

Alicia Owens: HS SS

There are several things I have learned during my first year. One thing is to not be afraid to ask for help. It is good to debrief at the end of the day and just reflect on what was accomplished through your lessons.

Martha Burrell: VOC

I think one of the things that has helped me the most is the relationships I have developed with the other teachers at school. At least two or three times a week we have an opportunity to get together and just talk—sometimes about problems at school and sometimes about other things. Because of this, I know there is always someone I can go to for help, advice, or just a shoulder to lean on.

Clint McElrath: HS SS

Another good teaching tip is to establish a great relationship with the staff that surrounds you. This is one thing I am really lucky to have. The history staff has been great to work with and is always helping me out in some way. I also have a great relationship with the administration, which is constantly helping me and checking in with me on how things are going. This is one thing that I am thankful for and is a good tip to remember in your first year of teaching.

Kimberly Williams: HS FACS

Never hesitate to ask for help. I have had a wonderful experience with my mentor and other co-workers who have answered question after question for me over the year.

Pam Pattillo: HS FACS

Don't talk about your fellow teachers. It is unprofessional, and it makes you look bad.

Reflection**Zack Stockbridge: HS SCI**

One of the most important things we can do as educators is to reflect on what we've done. A practical way to reflect with an aim towards future improvement is to simply make an extra copy of each assignment you do with the students. As you go through the assignment, make notes on your reflection copy. The most important thing, I've discovered, is jotting down what changes I need to make to the assignment before I do the assignment again with students next year/semester: re-wording questions, adding or changing pictures, changing formats, etc. Other important notes to write down are: what specific things you'll need to be more clear on during instruction next time, what mistakes to watch out for, look for what went well, areas for discussion, etc.

Another good habit is keeping a journal. Write notes to yourself every day about every period; write about what went well, what you'd do differently next time, clarify important thoughts, etc.

Reflection is a habit that, yes, takes some time when time is already short. However, when the next semester or year comes around, you will already have specific notes written down for yourself as you go through the planning/preparation for individual lessons or entire units. You will not have to rely on just your memory—you will have already told yourself exactly what must be done to improve your teaching and assignments.

Steven Barchie: HS MATH

Teachers with 30 years of experience have told me that the dynamics of schools have changed. They say it is a reflection of society in general. Kids are not as respectful. Parents are not as supportive. It used to be that if a child was in trouble at school they were in trouble at home, and this is no longer the case.

I was talking to a first-year science teacher the other day who was very discouraged about the constant class disruptions and disrespect. I reminded him about the baggage the children come to school with these days. Most of the children I have trouble with come from broken homes and have real issues with any kind of authority figure. Some come from abusive home environments and just need someone to be accepting and encouraging. Others are just immature and don't have a clue about what is important in life. Education is not on their radar.

My advice was to hang in there and not give up. I have seen kids turn around when the light finally came on. Reaching out to kids and showing them that you care pays off in the long run. I teach math, certainly; but more importantly, I teach kids. Math is a tool to teach kids to think and to realize what they can do when they try.

Misbehavior is often a symptom of deeper problems. We are in a battle to rescue kids from despair and give them a hope. Much of the curriculum that I teach many of the kids will never see or use again, but it serves as a vehicle to teach the greater life lessons.

I encourage myself with these thoughts. I can tell myself not to take the verbal attacks personally but that is easier said than done. It does affect me. Knowing others face the same struggles is a help. When I talk to other teachers, I realize it is not me who is the target. So hang in there. We will reap a harvest if we do not faint.



tips for **K-12 Certified Teachers**

Planning and Preparation

Organization: Day-to-Day

Eric Toedtman: PE

The best advice I can give on this topic is to be organized and always allow plenty of time. Organization is the key for me. But in order to be organized with my preparation and planning, I need to have plenty of time. Do not wait until the last minute.

Brandon Sutton: SPED

I have used an Excel spreadsheet to manage my case load. I also found that keeping a copy of the Standard Course of Study and IEP goals in with my lesson plan book makes lesson planning easier and more efficient. The Standard Course of Study is also a great asset in developing IEP goals.

Eric Toedtman: PE

Always be prepared and organized. If there was anything I learned from my Boy Scout days, it's to always be prepared. Each day brings about a different challenge, as we all know, but if we are prepared (with lesson plans and bonus material for each day) and organized (have everything we need at our fingertips), we will be successful as teachers. I feel like this goes a long way with today's student.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Joanna McMahan: SPED E-mentor

We do the same thing with Excel, Brandon. Great idea! We also ordered an organizer from teacher-created materials, and it looks like post office boxes. We use each slot for form documents from the state. It makes doing paperwork so much easier and costs about forty dollars. We actually got a second one this past semester and keep all sorts of other materials related to the paperwork process. Anyone on our staff, who needs anything, can find it with one look.

Long-Term Planning

Caroline Ottinger: ART

I have found that it is extremely beneficial to take the time—maybe a couple of times a month during a planning-time slot—to really search for new ideas and/or materials. Sometimes I find the most useful ideas looking through old texts that have been shelved

and saved in the back of the art room for who knows how many years. I have wonderful new text materials to use in my classrooms, but they are really set up for students who have art once a week rather than every other week. As a result, I have to pick and choose bits and pieces in order to cover as much of the curriculum as possible. In the older texts, the projects that accompany the lessons are more concise, so I have found that sometimes using a project that combines the two is the best answer. I've also had good results ordering and using supplementary materials.

Erin Tapley: WCU ART E-mentor

Plan activities for the first week of school/semester so that you can assess what students are strong/deficient in. It is tempting as a new teacher to want to relax by planning out the whole year, but one usually has to redo this later anyhow!

Robert Jessup: MUS

What I have found works for me when I'm getting ready for a concert, and could apply to other subjects as well, is to set a date for a concert or when your testing is and then plan from there. Count back the weeks from your date and set what you want to get accomplished in those weeks. I have two concerts scheduled for this semester with my larger ensembles as well as a few for my smaller group, and this process has helped out a lot. We are getting a lot more accomplished in a short period of time, and my students have an idea of where we are heading and what needs to be done.

Additional Note from E-mentor

Gayle Woody: ART E-mentor

I use a Curriculum Map to plan my year and make sure I am covering the objectives in the Standard Course of Study for that grade. Then I look at each objective and plan so that students are exposed to various medium. Using that framework, I plug in specific lessons. I can be flexible with individual lessons as things change throughout the year, such as, units classroom teachers are introducing that we may want to collaborate on. The framework helps me be sure that I am covering the skills I want my students to learn each year as they attend art class. Then I can build on those skills each year so students can make progress in their ability to create art and take their creativity to the next level.

Chris Ulery: MUS E-mentor

I plan in reverse. I start with what they need to learn for the semester and then break this into various units. Most all units need to be continuously reinforced and will be touched on throughout the year. Finding materials/pieces that can be used to teach these—and others, to reinforce them—is the hardest part for me. I always uncover things that need to be taught through the year and have to change my plan, but having a good plan to begin with is a good start.

Classroom Environment

Community and Behavior

Ashley Burnett: ESL

I have honestly struggled with creating and maintaining an effective classroom environment at the middle school. This age is very difficult, and I have a variety of ages and levels of English proficiency in one room. However, I have succeeded by changing the way I view my classroom. At first I was trying to get all the students to learn in the same

way and at the same pace, but I realized that I have such a diverse classroom that the traditional ways of teaching were not going to work. I now look at each student as an individual and I try to conform to the needs of each student. It is a lot of work; however, students who feel appreciated and worthy are much harder workers than those who feel that they are not good enough, or smart enough.

Melanie Galliers: SPED

I wonder everyday what my classroom will be like. Everyday is something different. I never have two days the same. To make my day go smoothly, I stay consistent in things that I do. I also try to stay as patient as I can. If things do not go as planned, I take a breather and just keep going. The best thing to remember is to realize that every day is different. If you are positive throughout the day, then your students will be the same.

Cristy Passmore: SPED

In my classroom I have 10 five-year-olds all with developmental delays in various areas. Several of the children are behavioral. If I notice that the children are “not with me,” I like to take a music break. I choose a song that is fun to sing along with and has movement. Another idea that I have been trying, and seems to be working well, is yoga—for kids, of course. Which one you choose is determined by whether you have a lot of energy to get out, or if the children need to be calmed. Regardless, it really seems to help on those especially tough days.

Leigh Ayling: ART

I think making my expectations clear at the beginning of the year for rules and procedures in the classroom has been very helpful. When new students join the class, I use that opportunity to review the expectations with the whole class. This helps the new student, the existing student, and me. I also review them after a long break from school just to refresh everyone’s memory.

Jeremy Ellenburg: PE

Structure is one of the most important things I have found. One way that I feel like I maintain an effective classroom environment is by coming into class everyday and having a good attitude. Whether you are in a good mood that morning or not does not matter at all. FAKE IT! If you aren’t having a good morning when those students come in, they will know it and your class will not go as smooth. I have found that if you show enthusiasm in what you are doing then your students will be enthusiastic about being there. This is something that has really turned my classroom around this year.

Jeremy Ellenburg: PE

One of the biggest things I have learned in my first year of teaching is to make sure your students know that you are in charge. At first you have to be stern and then lighten up later. It is much easier to lighten up than be too easy and then try to be strict later.

Lauren Rogers: SPED

One thing I have learned over the last year, being a new teacher, is attitude. At the beginning of my teaching career, I was so stressed out that I let it affect my attitude in the classroom. If something didn’t go just as I had planned, or one of my students was misbehaving, I would be so stressed out. But now I have learned to let it go. Everything is not going to go as you wish. When I have a positive, relaxed attitude, my students do well. Now I have patience and say, “Okay, Let’s take this one step at a time.” With special needs students you have to have lots of patience and flexibility. You cannot expect to always be on schedule as planned. I have learned that this is okay!

Another thing that I have learned over the past few months is to have humor! Students love it when I laugh with them or say something funny. Laughter is a stress reliever. It makes the whole classroom attitude more open and positive. If I am in a happy mood, most of the time my classroom runs a lot smoother!

Lacey Hensley: SPED

I was hired in January to take over a K-2 resource room; this makes for an interesting beginning. The advice I can give is, take the time you need to make your room yours. It was important for me to get the room set up the way I wanted it so that I felt comfortable in it. Next, I visited with my students in their regular classroom for about a week before I began pulling them. This allowed me to build a bond with them before I pulled them out in small groups. The first day I pulled students out for instruction, we set up our class rules, rewards, and consequences. This gave the students ownership for their behavior because they supplied their rules. Making sure you have clear expectations and consequences is very important in working with children. We still review these rules (there are only 4) regularly. It is also important to make sure the students know that we are here to help each other, not hurt one another. I keep this saying up in my room, and we read it every day. I have had a wonderful couple of months in my classroom and hope to continue to be able to say this for the rest of the year, and beyond.

Byron McCall: PE

I think staying positive about what your doing affects not only the children but the people who work around you. If you learn to laugh and enjoy the good days, I think the bad days don't come as often. There are going to be tons of children that like what you are doing, and you need to remember that when you might have one or two negative comments. Worry about the majority and remember to enjoy the ones who enjoy what you are doing. Don't let the minority keep you down. The last thing I think you need to do is just enjoy what you are doing. Physical Education is supposed to be fun and educational for everyone!

Additional Note from E-mentor

Chris Ulery: MUS E-mentor

Consistency would have to be most important. If the students understand the expectations and rules, and they are the same each day, most all of the students will follow them almost all of the time. Making these clear for the students and parents at the beginning of the year and holding the students accountable is the most important part. This, of course, does not mean that you will not have to deal with problems and have students not follow the rules of your room; but if they know the expectations are the same each day, it will make your expectations easier to follow.

Chris Reynolds: PE E-mentor

This works best at the beginning of the year but can be implemented any time. I have a definite routine that I teach my classes on how to enter the gym. I try to make all of my rules related to safety so the kids don't think they are being limited unfairly or too strictly. I have very strict guidelines in the gym, but all of my kids can tell you the rules we have are for their safety. This helps greatly when enforcing rules and helps the kids learn respect for others as well.

Dan Grube: WCU PE E-mentor

A positive learning environment is so important to a safe and successful PE class. Kids have to know that PE is a structured, safe and fun place to learn. Some simple things to remember each day is to be positive with your students. Catch them being good and point that out to the entire class. Instead of lecturing them when they are not behaving the way that you want them to, praise the ones that are by publicly thanking them for listening and following your directions. Avoid calling down your students in front of the class, rather handle inappropriate behaviors discretely. Kids should be allowed to participate at a level where they can be successful, so always provide options, or different levels of criteria, for each task. Always, always, always pack your classes with activity. Your students don't want to come to the gym to sit and listen. They do that in their classrooms all day, and the gym floor is hard! The best thing you can do is show your students that you love your job.

An Efficient Environment**Natalie Manget: ART**

I have many strategies for keeping a successful classroom environment that I have worked on in the few years I've been teaching. I have learned that by keeping students' attention right from the start, I have less discipline to deal with. Here is what I do: Every day I have a sketchbook assignment posted on the board that they complete in 15 to 20 minutes. On Fridays, this sketchbook assignment is replaced with a writing assignment. This is established from the first day and they expect it. This allows me time to set up for the studio part of the class. There is never down time between transitions because while they are working on their sketchbook, I'm busy setting up.

After sketchbooks, we do 20 minutes of art history. I have been lucky in that I have a projector that I use for this. The kids take notes on PowerPoint presentations that I make on the art history lessons. Every other day we have a quiz over the information. And the remainder of class—about 50 minutes—we work on the studio portion, which is the project of the week(s). I use music as a way to keep them on task. If they are quiet they get to listen to it. Allowing the students to contribute a favorite song to a burned, class CD makes them want to stay quiet and on task to listen to it. If it gets loud, or people are off task, I can take that away... but I've never even had to threaten that. I also keep the overhead lights off and the shades wide open. The natural light is calming and something different. I think my class is successful and a nice place for them to be. I've heard from many that this is by far their favorite classroom environment to be in.... it just works.

Tracy Austin: PE

Structure, structure, structure. My students have color spots, which are assigned seats. This allows me to take roll and keep the students under control while I transition from one class to another. Once they sit down, we always do a warm-up (sometimes a warm-up song from a CD, laps, or fitness exercises). After the warm-up, we work on an activity related to the unit we are working on. At the end of class, we line up and I remind the students of upcoming events in class, and review. This really works well.

April Buchanan: PE

Structure is very important for a PE class. If you don't have structure then kids are more likely to become chaotic and nobody is having fun. On the first day of school, I told the girls to sit on one line and the boys on the other. This is how we start class everyday. They sit, and when we are ready, we stretch. After stretching, we do fitness stations. Each individual knows where to start and how to rotate. Most of the time we do our

fitness to music. The students know to rotate when the music stops. After fitness, we do our activity. The last 3-4 minutes of every day, I tell the students to go back and sit where they stretched. This gives the students time to relax and calm down before going to their next class.

Kristie Wike: SPED

This has been an area that I have struggled with since taking my job at the end of last year. However, I am proud to announce that things are running much smoother! The issue I had was not using my paraprofessionals to their full ability. I can reflect on some of the earlier concerns I faced, and those were truly my fault. You must share and delegate the jobs and responsibilities of the classroom to the others who work with you. You cannot successfully do everything that needs to be done—there is simply not enough time in the day, nor energy! Ken Prohn came to my class before Christmas; he thought a schedule detailing everyone's roles might help. Actually sitting everyone down and talking about our problems helped. My assistants each have a “group” during Center time with which they work. They each have “classroom” jobs that they're responsible for, throughout the day. Our class is functioning so effectively, and my stress level has bottomed out. We still have issues (we don't have enough people to take all the students to regular education classes), but we are working together as a team to create solutions to our problems. I have also realized how creative my assistants are. With early childcare experience, they are wonderful at coming up with crafts and art projects for our students. So, my advice is to use the help you have been given. Please, take it from me, you can burn out quickly. Let others help you do your job; you need them.

Angie Sims: SPED

The things that works best for me to maintain an effective classroom environment are visually structured activities, visual schedules, and anything else visual. I work in a classroom with students with autism and this is the most important thing. The schedules work so well, because the students do not have to “guess” or “worry” about what is happening next. Also, everything is labeled and it is very obvious, when you walk in my room, what each area is. Also, the entire day is very structured. There is no “free time” to just run around. Of course, there is time to play, but each student has a place to be—whether on the computer, doing art, or playing in the activity area (building things), etc. I use a timer when it's time to check schedules when they are in this “free time.” And I can honestly say that for the most part, after many months of school, they are actually stopping what they are doing, and they go check their schedules!!! YAY!!!

Physical Environment

Meritt Petrone: SPED

Although I am the teacher of an Autistic Support classroom, I find it absolutely essential for visuals to be a part of the classroom—especially at the preschool, Kindergarten, and elementary level. But for all levels of ECP, kids I find it essential. I use visuals to designate what specific areas of the room are for. I use visual pictures to show the kids what is coming up next, how much work they need to do, and when they will be finished. I use visuals to show which toys go where, to teach them how to clean up, and to maintain independence. Just think of when you are overwhelmed. Having a visual list of things to do is essential to organize your thoughts. I used to be the teacher for a main-streamed pre-school room, and the general kids were so much more behaved when I used visuals—instead of verbal direction. I think it's human nature to be more calm when you know what is expected of you.

Megan Hacker: SPED

Visual structure in the classroom has made the biggest difference for the very large, young men in my classroom. Each area has a clearly designated purpose. The schedules are visual, which allows them to know what they are supposed to be doing at any given time—no matter how bad the day. Talking about and demonstrating expected behavior before we transition into another environment helps also. Even these expected behaviors are followed up with a visual token economy. All of these supports have addressed problem areas of behavior so that more time is available to address teaching academics and life skills (other than behavioral).

Julie Phillips: SPED

I keep a clean and organized classroom. The teacher before me kept large amounts of clutter. After I was hired, I cleaned and organized the classroom. The students noticed it first thing. They even said they could learn better without the clutter. This has really increased their learning experiences. Keeping a positive, organized, and clean classroom has worked wonders for my students.

Charlene Benton: SPED

Most of my kids are BED kids and what seems to be most effective for them is they all have cubbies to study in. This helps with attention problems and behavior problems. The level system is effective, too.

Instruction

Brittany Coleman: ART

I have found with my art classes that the less I talk, the more the students learn. I am an advocate for hands-on learning. In an hour-and-a-half class, I only talk for about 15 minutes to explain an assignment. Then the students are busy and learning as they go. I also feel it is important for students to learn through large projects. Large projects allow the students to learn about every aspect of the topic discussed. Large projects are easy to do in the art classroom and can easily be done in other subject areas. Too many times, math, science and history teachers try to teach through worksheets and lecture. I don't remember any information in high school that was learned from a worksheet. But I do remember large, hands-on projects. So don't take the easy route by copying worksheets and talking with PowerPoint. Allow the students to explore and experiment in any subject area.

Caroline Ottinger: ART

I try to vary my instruction within each lesson. I usually begin by introducing the subject matter and asking lots of questions - leading them to the correct response without directly giving it to them. Then, I almost always have some sort of illustration drawn on the board along with important vocabulary. I usually try not to linger on these steps too long before allowing them some mobility. Whenever possible, especially when introducing new materials or techniques, I'll have them all gather around one table to watch me demonstrate. Other times I'll have them move to another area of the room and sit on the floor around me, so that I can read some relevant material to them. I then give them instructions for setting up their tables for the project at hand. Sometimes, when the lesson allows for it, I also set the tables up like Centers so that I can move students from one step to another without the speedy finishers twiddling their thumbs, and without the slower workers feeling rushed and pressured.

Leigh Ayling: ART

I like to hang up an example—actually several examples—that show the steps to the finished project. I sometimes use written words, but not many, because so many of my students are non-readers (I only teach first- and second-grade). It really cuts down on the “What do I do next?” if they can refer to it easily.

Kimberly Tribe: ESL

I am so grateful that my county decided to invest in Thinking Map training. It has really helped my ELL's to begin to think and work in English. It aids in organizing their thoughts and our classroom discussions. I even included three different maps as part of my final exam last semester. I don't know how I taught without them!

Teresa Schmid: SPED

I am a resource teacher and found that giving each student a 3-ring notebook for work was helpful for keeping everything organized. Each student's goals were placed inside the cover so he/she could see them.

Meritt Petrone: SPED

I have a student who is very low academically and also has severe behavior problems. In order to get him ready for Extend 2 testing, we have been having him do his independent work with a timer, and, in the actual area where he will be tested. I have seen a great improvement in his willingness to do structured work with a timer, which will prepare him for the tests.

Angie Sims: SPED

I have a student in the seventh grade, and he really needs to be getting prepared to go to the high school. One of his goals this year was to use a calendar. We put one of the large desk calendars on his desk and, due to his handwriting, write whatever is happening (speech, OT, etc.) on it with a highlighter. Also, we include the time. His schedule, every morning is to check his calendar. He then traces over what he has to do that day. I can proudly say that he can now tell us what is happening that day and has become very successful in using a calendar and telling us what time he goes to certain things. Next, we will use a smaller calendar that he can carry around. One step at a time!!

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Chris Ulery: MUS E-mentor

The most effective part of the instruction for me is having the students understand the importance of what they are learning. If they understand the value of what they are doing, they are more engaged and will work toward the goals you have set. Setting clear goals and having the students understand the steps to achieving their goals will also have them understand the importance of what you are trying to accomplish. There is also no more effective method, that shows them the importance of what they are doing, than being prepared everyday.

Gayle Woody: ART E-mentor

I am working toward having three varied methods to introduce each lesson. This is an ongoing process; but as I work toward this, it becomes the best possible practice in my classroom.

1. I create a poster with all the steps for the lesson written out. This is for using written expression and helps to remind students of the order of the process, as well as, to keep them from constantly asking “What do I do next?”
2. I verbally explain the steps as I point to the poster for those with lower reading ability or vocabulary.
3. I demonstrate the process and have a finished product for students to see where they are headed.

When I have all three strategies in place, I find the lessons go very well with greater student confidence and ownership of their ability to be creative. I stress that the steps are important, but their creativity comes into play as they individually follow each step. The poster also helps with students who are absent and need to follow the beginning steps as the rest of the class goes on. These three strategies address the various learning styles of students with varying intelligences. It is effective with ECP students.

Professional Responsibilities

Administrative Tasks (Paperwork, Meetings, etc.)

Sandra Davis: ART

First of all, it is good to know what is expected by your principal and what the school considers your professional responsibility. Know your own definition of professional responsibility and how it relates to that of your principal and school community. Professional responsibilities include respecting your administrator, the parents, and the students; knowing the guidelines of the school; knowing your extra-curricular activities and duties.

Kim Hargis: MUS

The last thing I would like to talk about is going to meetings throughout your career. Sometimes when I go to a meeting and I realize some of the older teachers are not attending, it makes me feel like “Why do I have to do this if they don’t?” I realize going to faculty and team meetings is sometimes the ONLY place I have a say in what is going on at our school.

Everyone going into the teaching profession realizes that it is not just an 8–3 job and that you have to put in that extra time, even when you do not feel like it.

Karen Newsom: SPED

As a first-year special education teacher, I have learned a lot about organization this year. Organization is essential to stay on top of the Special Ed. paperwork! I constantly had to refer to paper files and electronic (CECAS) files, which took a lot of time just to find out simple things such as when an IEP is due. I created an Excel spreadsheet to keep up with student information for my entire case load. On this document I have birth dates, placement dates, subjects and area of eligibility, annual review dates, re-evaluation dates, related services, modifications/exemptions, phone #, parent’s names, teachers, grades, sessions/weeks, and due dates for re-evaluations. By keeping all of this information in one handy document, I avoid having to look up this information in student files, and on CECAS. Also, I can use this as a checklist when I review information in files and CECAS, for head counts. I keep a printed copy that I take to schedule meetings, call parents, talk with teachers, etc.; so I always have the key information that I need. This one document has saved me so much time!

Parents

Byron McCall: PE

I think the biggest adjustment to being a teacher is that you will have a few people who will not like what you're doing. I'm teaching over 500 students a day, and the entire year I have only had three or four parents say anything that has bothered me. Those three or four parents have irritated me. And, I let them get to me, instead of thinking about the other 400 children that are pleased with what I am doing. I think that when going into teaching you must be able to not let your emotions or feelings get to you.

"Extra" Duties

Kim Hargis: MUS

I know sometimes having to work cafeteria duty in the morning, or at lunch, and doing bus duty can feel like an extra chore. But I feel that it is very important for everyone to do their part. I also realize that it gives me time to talk to the students that I may not always get to converse with in my class. Since I am the music teacher, I also know every student by name, which helps keep order. These other responsibilities also give me a chance to meet parents that I would not normally get to meet.

I also feel it is really important to attend after-school activities. Students really like to see you at their games—and even practices. It's an easy way to show that you care, so work an after-school game every once in a while.

Miscellaneous

Chris Ulery: MUS E-mentor

There are so many professional responsibilities that have so little to do with actually teaching, that it's tough to pick just a few. Doing your "extra" duties as expected (open house, bus duty, lunch duty, IEP conferences, PTA meetings, etc.) is important and is difficult sometimes to juggle with all of your other responsibilities. For administrators, these are all safety and parent-relation issues that are very important. While these are not things that directly impact what goes on in your classroom, they are very important to being involved in your school. The other problem I see new teachers getting themselves into is not being involved in their state organization, and not meeting deadlines, and not reading the rules for students to participate in state events. Having students disqualified because a teacher does not understand the requirements does happen and is very embarrassing, and tough to explain to parents.

Other Tips

Priorities

Leslie Rosenberg: ART

I am a big fan of taking care of one's self. I think it is important to remember that teachers are always on a learning curve, and the first year has the steepest slope. Remembering to relax, taking deep breaths, and realizing that you will almost always be more successful the second time around is paramount to a teacher's long-term endurance. To make sure I have left time for myself, I try to get most of my work done at school so my nights are free. I would rather come earlier or stay later at school to plan, than bring too much work home with me.

Melanie Galliers: SPED

The largest problem that I have had during the course of my first year is dealing with stress in and outside of school. I have had to learn that things that are going on outside of school and things that are going on inside of school do not belong in my classroom. In doing my job I have to focus on the students and the lesson—or problem at hand. Everything else comes second. But when something does come along that is stressful, I go for a walk or find something to channel my stress into. If I did not find something else to focus on, I would go nuts.

Karen Newsom: SPED

Take care of yourself, first and foremost. If you're not happy and healthy, then you will not be a good teacher! As a first-year teacher, you will go through a "survival" stage in the beginning, and you will learn that this is meant quite literally. You will be just barely getting by with all the energy that you have. So take advantage of the resources you have. Let your friends and family cook you dinner and help you out. Learn to drop everything at a reasonable time in the afternoon, leave it ALL at school, go home and relax (and don't feel guilty about it!). Read a good book, take a bubble bath, go out for pizza, go to the movies, do whatever you like to do. You have to schedule relaxation in or you will not make it! It took me way too long to learn this. You will never be perfect, and there will always be things to improve every day. Just take it step-by-step and celebrate those small successes; then go home and enjoy the time that you have and the people that you love. I am extremely dedicated to, and passionate about my job; but I had to learn to make my life outside of school a priority. I had to make time for what was most important to me and my well-being; and in doing so, I became a better teacher. My wish for you is that you will learn this sooner than I did!

Surround Yourself with Positive People**Tracy Austin: PE**

If you stay positive, you will survive the first year of teaching. On days that seemed to really get to me, I focused on the positive aspects of being a teacher and thought of all the support I had received from my students, their parents, and the faculty at school. Good luck to next year's first-year teachers!

Jamie Brockwell: PE

I agree with Tracy—stay positive. Also, try to stay away from co-workers who are negative. Attempt to surround yourself with co-workers who are positive. On a stressful day, sometimes a friendly smile and a compliment is all you need to cheer up.

April Buchanan: PE

I have to agree with the others, STAY POSITIVE!! If you look at everything in a negative way, then you will never have a good day. When I am struggling with something, I always go to my buddy/teacher and ask for advice. My buddy/teacher is wonderful and always has a positive word to give to me.

Help!**Erin Tapley: WCU ART E-mentor**

A harrowing day, or a misadventure in it, will be amplified if you share it in the teacher's lounge because everyone has these moments. On one hand, one can feel not so alone when these are shared, but in mass doses you can easily get discouraged by the profession in general. When a day strikes and you completely feel "not cut out for it," talk to an upbeat, non-teaching friend who will listen and, most of all, get you to laugh.

Sharon De Grasse: ESL

One of the biggest things I've had to learn is to not be too proud to ask for help. At first, I thought that it was admitting failure or defeat to ask for help on something I didn't understand or needed more practice at; but I'm coming to see that everyone has to do it! If I just ask, most teachers, secretaries, and other school personnel are so eager to help out! This has been an extremely valuable lesson for me.

Additional Notes from E-mentors

Chris Ulery: MUS E-mentor

Those first couple of years are often the toughest. Having a mentor or two to offer support and serve as a sounding board is important. These are often not your officially assigned mentor, but a teacher in your department or someone that you are comfortable talking to. Talking with your peers and sharing the everyday trials and tribulations of the job has a great therapeutic effect. Try to keep from isolating yourself from the others in your school. It's very easy when your subject area is very specialized and you are the only one in your school that does what you do. Keep in touch with those you graduated with. They are going through the same things everyday that you are. Last, create some time away for yourself. It's so easy to burn yourself out in those first couple of years. When you are away from work—be away.



tips for **Working with Your Mentor**

Entering the teaching profession is challenging - each school and teaching situation is unique. Schools differ in many ways: they may be large or small, urban or rural; some have many resources while others lack adequate funding. Beginning teachers depend on their mentors to help them understand their school's mission, history, and traditions as well as the spoken and unspoken policies and procedures.

The following are suggestions to help new teachers work more effectively with their mentors and other professional colleagues:

- Absorb every bit of advice that your mentor can give you; keep a journal of advice to reflect on and use to help future beginning teachers.
- Ask your mentors about anything that you are unsure of without fear of judgment. Ask! Ask! Ask!
- Keep a log of questions for your mentors that arise throughout the week.
- Remember that you have mentors other than your assigned experienced teacher: the entire faculty and staff. Have a “work family!”
- Do not EVER feel like you are a burden to your mentor; that’s what they are for and they love to help you!
- Keep in mind that mentors help a great deal with policies and commonly known aspects of the school. Listen carefully to these things.
- Communicate as much as possible with your mentor, even if it’s in passing in the hallway.
- Take your mentor’s advice and adapt it to YOUR teaching style.
- Utilize any instructional resources and materials that your mentor teacher offers; it will save you time and energy in the long run.
- Go in with an open mind when meeting with your mentor.
- Ask for help as soon as a concern/issue arises. Don’t wait until it’s snowballed into an out-of-control problem.
- Find someone who fits you, someone you feel comfortable with. It may or may not be your assigned mentor. If it isn’t, you can still have a positive relationship with your mentor and gain lots of insight and another perspective.



- Ask mentors to help you with time management in and out of the classroom. They've been in the business for a while and tend to have effective tips and strategies to ensure an equitable balance.
- Be up-front and honest with your mentor from day one. Tell him/her what you need and go from there. This will ensure that the lines of communication are clear and open, and therefore, establish a solid, effective relationship.
- Remember that contacts with your mentor do not have to be formal, structured meetings. You could make a quick phone call, drop an e-mail or even go for a walk or grab a cup of coffee. Don't create one more stressful meeting that you feel forced to add to your agenda.
- Be humble and share your painful situations; you will be blessed.
- If you do not ask, then you will not find the answer. If you are nervous about asking face-to-face, shoot them an e-mail instead.
- Use your mentor as a venue for approaching administration with any difficulties that you may be facing.
- Ask questions, and call on your mentor if you encounter problems. But don't depend on them for everything. You must learn to do things for yourself, and the sooner you learn things on your own, the better you'll feel and be able to function on your own.
- Realize that your mentor will let you make mistakes and learn from them; this method has proven successful with teachers, too!
- Use your mentor to your advantage; communicate your issues, listen, and learn. And, most importantly, show your appreciation.



Mission of the Center

The mission of the Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers is to address the need for an adequate supply of highly qualified teachers by supporting the professional development of beginning teachers and their transition to the classroom. Induction activities include face-to-face meetings complemented and enhanced by an electronic network developed for beginning teachers; ongoing professional development for mentors; and opportunities for principals to focus on their role in new teacher development. The Center provides a comprehensive approach that includes support, practice, feedback, and evaluation collaboratively delivered by the school systems and the university.

Center for the
SUPPORT of
Beginning
TEACHERS

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